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PROVINCIAL LETTERS

AND OTHER PAPERS

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BY THE AUTHOR OF
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ADVERTISEMENT

THE papers in this volume are, for the most part, a selection from those contributed during the last few years to the *Cornhill Magazine*; but one is from the *Quarterly Review*, and one from *Longman's Magazine*. In every case the writer would acknowledge the Editor's courtesy in allowing the reprint.

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PROVINCIAL LETTERS

I

A HOUSE IN HERTFORDSHIRE

HERTS.—Elizabethan farm-house to be let; capable of improvement; stands alone with extensive view; interesting associations; four miles from station, G.N.R.; suitable for artist or literary man; moderate rent. Apply, &c.

THE advertisement was captivating. What could be more congenial to a misanthrope of the twentieth century than to find himself actually four miles from a railway station, and to a lover of letters than to find himself in the Hertfordshire of Izaak Walton and Charles Lamb, and that, too, in an Elizabethan house "with associations"? The modern solecism of "to be let" instead of "to let" gave us a moment's pause, as suggesting that the writer of the notice was perhaps less in touch with literature than his quotation from Dr. Johnson about the view pretended; but our imagination had been fired, and we took bicycle and went to see for ourselves. The house proved to be even more captivating than the advertise-

ment; and, to make a short story, we were captured. What we found was an E-shaped Tudor building of rosy brick standing in a forecourt, with a low wall of the same auroral colour; its long, square-headed windows, with their stone mullions, being filled, as was right, with leaded, diamond-shaped panes. The house was only one room deep, so that it reminded us of Spenser's "House of Pride"; but the staircase was immense, giving an effect of spaciousness beyond the fact, and such rooms as there were were large, and, what is more, lofty. The "associations" we found to be with the great Queen herself, who is locally reported to have hidden in one of the attics; on what occasion we could not ascertain. It must have been when she was playing hide-and-seek on some visit as a little girl to the B.'s, whose manor-house it was; for there was no room that could ever have been missed in a search. But the phrase of the advertisement that had most taken our fancy was "capable of improvement." Englishmen are born with a passion for improving something; it is well known that if their instincts in this sort do not get enough exercise in the Legislature or some lesser council, or in their own business, or gardens, they will take to improving each other, often with disastrous consequences.

Our talents here were promised abundant scope.

The garden was a wilderness of weeds, in which no esculent vegetables were recognisable except a gaunt cabbage and a few currant bushes; the farmyard would tax all our invention to convert into whatever form of goodliness seemed possible —rose-garden or bowling-green; and the house itself cried aloud for the improving influences of whitewash and carbolic soap. Then there was the joy of furnishing. The mind stretched forward to the excitement of excursions to St. Albans, and Hitchin, and Hertford, in search of grandfather clocks and copper coal-scuttles and oak benches and fire-dogs, and generally furniture of any other age than our own.

When, in process of time, we were settled in and were preparing to enjoy our sober hermitage, we began to realise that we were to be less lonely than we had dreamed. First, a nest of cottages discovered itself, of which we soon learned that we were the proper prey. Their hares and rabbits we were content to engross without asking questions; the fruit of their orchards we were fain to purchase at famine prices because we had none of our own; we let them persuade us that a house so lonely required a watch-dog of singular ferocity, and a kennel which from its cost might have been "ceiled with cedar and painted with vermilion"; and all the worn-out farm implements from the last half-century of county sales—diggers,

and wheelbarrows, and scythes—presented themselves for purchase. One day there came a cockatoo that had been caught in a tree. The pious elder who brought it explained that, being in doubt how to pay his rent at Michaelmas, this bird had come from above to supply his need; so that its price was £3, 12s. 6d. We demurred to this predestinarian method of fixing values, but promised to keep the bird a few days to discover his points. On the third day he released himself from his chain by opening a link with his beak—an art he had evidently perfected by practice—and sped off again into the woods, perhaps to supply the rent of some other pious cottager. Meanwhile we found ourselves in a difficulty. The bird was not ours, and we had lost him. It was clearly a case for arbitration, and we suggested that it should be referred to the clergyman of the parish. But an unanticipated arbitrator appeared in the person of the village constable, who had got wind of the matter, and was indignant that no notice of the bird's capture had been given to him. The would-be Elijah accordingly found himself a delinquent, and beholden to my good offices to avert the displeasure of the law; so that, in the event, the affair resolved itself into a distribution of *douceurs*.

A second and far more objectionable invasion of our solitude arose from the fact unknown to

us, and we trust also to the advertiser of the house, that we were scheduled as a "local curiosity" in the Hertfordshire programme of the bicycling world. I am not likely to forget the first Saturday afternoon of our residence. Up the hill came wild trumpetings as of a herd of elephants in pain, and into our newly gravelled drive there rushed panting a motor tricycle, followed by three motor bicycles, and after a slight interval by a flock of the ordinary species. They passed into the orchard which commands the "extensive view" already spoken of, and proceeded to unpack their wallets and enjoy their luncheon and the wide prospect together. I felt that it was idle, and might even be dangerous, to interpose between trumpeting elephants and their provender; so I waited till the signal of repletion was given by the striking of lucifer matches, and the upcurling of thin columns of smoke, and then proceeded to the scene of refection, which I found as "white as snow in Salmon" with sandwich-papers. "Do you gentlemen know," I began, "that you are trespassing?"

"We're not doing any harm, are we?" said the rider of the motor tricycle, who seemed to be the captain.

"Well, no," I said, "that is, if you will be so good as to collect your scattered papers. But for all that you are trespassing. You wouldn't

like me to bring my lunch and eat it without leave in your drawing-room."

"But this isn't your drawing-room, sir," was the reply.

"Well, then, in your garden!"

"I haven't got a garden."

This repartee excited merriment. As argument did not seem to appeal to elephant nature, I shifted my ground and asked another of the party to what I was indebted for the honour of the visit. "Well," he replied, "the *Hub* said there was a view, and so it was worth while doing the extra four miles from T——, but I've seen a better view from Primrose Hill." This excited more merriment, and I saw my opportunity. "Would you mind then," I said, "writing to—the paper you spoke of—and saying that my view is really not worth the extra journey?" And so we parted in good humour. I learned afterwards that the attraction of T—— is a tomb in the churchyard out of which spring six sycamores. Legend has it that the lady who is there buried doubted of the resurrection; whence the miracle; and every bicycle club in London deems it necessary to come down and be convinced by it.

Our solitude, therefore, it will be understood, was not so suited to the artist or man of letters as we had been led to believe; on some days with a barrel-organ, a motor-car or two, and

various parties of pilgrims in brakes, it became, in Cowley's phrase, "an Islington almost." And then there were the callers. It would ill become me to complain of the civility of our neighbours (using that term in a wide sense), who drove their five and ten miles to leave cards on the newcomers, and welcome us into "the fruitful fields of pleasant Hartfordshire." With some of them an acquaintance thus begun has ripened into friendship; with others it has remained a bowing acquaintance. The only calls we have, here or elsewhere, had reason to resent have been those made at the unsolicited instance of good-natured friends. I don't know if any novelist has remarked upon the manners sometimes displayed by people who have made a call at the request of common acquaintances, supposing they are so unfortunate as to be found at home when the call is returned. They are almost as interesting as the manners of ladies who hold drawing-room meetings for charitable purposes. (Of course, if you are at home when they perform the initial call, they are constrained to behave as though they did it from a free heart and mere goodwill.) The game, as played, opens by their not quite catching your name as you are announced, and looking a little distracted, as if to wonder what you want. The fatal move at this point is to say: "I think we have common friends in the

Joneses," because the retort comes pat: "Oh, have we?" and you have to begin again. A safer opening is: "I am sorry you did not find us at home when you called," because this leaves them face to face with the responsibility for the first step, which they must either explain away, or mend their manners. A skilful player would of course not be checkmated so early, ladies having a way of eluding both logic and responsibility which is my perpetual envy; and if they have been polite only by request, they must be allowed to mark the distinction, in case you should think they wanted to know you. But it is ungracious to dwell on such a topic; for the only house that thus slammed its door in our faces under pretence of opening it was not tenanted by an indigenous stock of "hearty, homely, loving Hertfordshire."

And so we come back to Charles Lamb. I must confess that it is only very lately, after reading an essay of Dr. Ainger's in an old volume of the *English Illustrated Magazine* lent me by a friendly divine, that I am become learned in the various spots sacred to the memory of Saint Charles. My first efforts to gain information about them, made at a garden party on first coming into the county, were not fortunate; but like every seeker after truth I had a reward, if not what I expected. I was talking with a clergyman of the type that always delights me, well set up

and with an unmistakable air of gentleman, and very little of the conventional parson in dress and manner. To my request for enlightenment about the Lambs he replied: "Oh, they lived quite near at Brocket Hall. The house was begun by Sir Matthew, the first baronet, and finished by the first Lord Melbourne. Of course you know all about Lady Caroline Lamb and Byron. Yes, you should certainly see Brocket; it has one of the most beautiful parks in England; and it was the home not only of Melbourne but of Palmerston; both died there." I hastened to explain that by the Lambs I had meant Charles Lamb and his sister. But my friendly clergyman did not know them. "No," he said, "I don't recall any Lamb of the name of Charles. There was George, and William, and Frederick. Anyhow you should see Brocket. It was once part of Hatfield Chace, and its oaks are as old as any in England. All this part of Hertfordshire was once forest, and that is why the roads twist about so. It was under one of the Brocket oaks that the Lady Elizabeth was sitting when the news came of Queen Mary's death. At least that is the Lamb tradition; the Cecil tradition puts the oak at Hatfield." Happily other inquiries put me on the track of the other Lambs, in whom, not being a politician, I felt more interest, and as the fine days at last came with departing summer we visited the

shrines. But I am not sure that I did not more enjoy reading about them in the guide-books. At Widford, for instance, there is little enough to recall Lamb himself, even less than there is to recall Shakespeare at Stratford; for he was not born there but in London, the house which he loved and has described in his "Essays" is pulled down, and the tomb that pilgrims visit is not his own, which is at Edmonton, but his grandmother's. Even that has suffered at the hand of fortune and the pious restorer. As Lamb describes it in "The Grandam":

> "A plain stone barely tells
> The name and date to the chance passenger."

But as we found it, the passage from "The Grandam" was cut on the stone itself, which thereby ceased to be "a plain stone barely telling," &c. We learned that an elm branch had fallen on the gravestone and broken it, and "the opportunity was taken," &c. &c. There are some opportunities, we generally call them "liberties," which ought not to be taken.

I venture to think a sentiment for places must be a sentiment at first hand. Lamb loved Widford and Mackery End because of their associations with his youth. It is difficult for other people to love them because of their association with Charles Lamb. Perhaps I am a Philistine;

perhaps I feel the direct sentiment too strongly to have any feeling left for the indirect. The fact remains that, much as I love Lamb (on this side of editing him), it was not at Widford or Mackery End that I dropt the tear of sensibility this summer, but at the little village of S——; where I myself lived for a few months some forty years ago. The picture of the place has hung ever since in a very sacred nook of memory, and I have cared less and less, as the separating years have grown in number, to compare it with the reality. But now that I was actually living within a few miles of the village, with time on my hands, the temptation proved irresistible, and with a lifting (or was it a sinking?) of heart I found myself approaching the place of my dreams. I had been sent to S——, when about six years old, to the care of an old dame—at least, I thought her old—who kept the village school, that I might recover in the strong air of the place from some childish ailment. As I recall her, she was an erect, homely-looking woman with cheeks like streaky apples, and a hand whose firmness I had more than one opportunity of estimating. I lived with her in the cottage adjoining the school-house, and naturally enough, when I was somewhat recovered, and able to be mischievous, she put me into school to be under her eye. I remember little of what

happened from day to day. There were a good many scrapes, most of them (like the primeval scrape of Eden) connected with apples; in which my tempter was the rector's son, some two years my elder. They were atoned for by discipline. It is the discipline of the school that I chiefly remember. The girls were punished by "thimble-pie." They crossed their hands on their heads and were rapped with a thimble on the knuckles, or, supposing they withdrew them, on their crowns. The punishment seemed cruel then, and it seems so still. The boys, for grave offences, were punished in more conventional fashion. I remember a punishment for truancy which moved our youthful pity and fear like some masterpiece of tragedy. The boy — his name would not come to mind, or I should have sought him out—had been threatened with the birch if he repeated the offence, and of course, truancy being in the blood, he repeated it, and then re-appeared the next day as though nothing had happened. I remember still the hardly suppressed excitement of the school as he came in. I can still see the light in the old dame's eyes as, after prayers, she took the birch from her desk, and bore down upon him. Then came a pause; something had evidently gone wrong; it proved to be that the young rebel had endeavoured to make assurance doubly sure by tying up his un-

mentionables with string. But he had miscalculated the resources of authority. A knife, fetched from the inner room by a satellite, made all too short work of his defences; and although, if my memory serves me, he bit in a most unsportsmanlike way, nothing could arrest the strokes of Nemesis. At the end of the morning there appeared his father, with a knife in one hand and a piece of bread and cheese in the other, and we looked to see murder done; but after some words had passed he turned away cowed by the indomitable dame. Another scene that comes up into memory was the inspection of the school which fell during my visit. To prepare for the examination all the slates were boiled in the good dame's copper. The examiner was a pompous clergyman with an enormous stock swathed round and round by a white neck-cloth, who annoyed me by mispronouncing the mistress's name. After the inspection came a prize-giving with recitations. I wonder if such entertainments were usual in Hertfordshire in the early sixties, or whether the little village of S—— was eminent for its humanities. The head girl, dressed for the business in cap and apron, recited a piece which began:

"Good morning, ma'am,
I've come to give you warning, ma'am;
I've put on my best apron for the purpose, ma'am."

It consisted, I believe, of home truths to mistresses —a sort of Saturnalia of domestic service—but I have sought it in vain in modern collections. Of my own experiences I can recall little but sins, with their expiations. On one occasion I made an attempt to assert superiority over the little yokels by refusing to rise from my seat when the rector left the room. Being remonstrated with, I performed at his next visit an exaggerated act of reverence, by mounting on the form and waving my arms. But my triumph was short-lived, for it chanced that the good man had forgotten his umbrella, and returning for it he surprised my demonstration; which put me out of countenance, as I was something of a favourite with him, and was privileged to hold his book while he christened the babies.

Well, there does not seem in these trivial recollections much food for sentiment; and yet as I drew near the village I could have laughed or cried with equal ease. I found the country more beautiful than I anticipated; it was the rolling, well-wooded Hertfordshire landscape, but I remembered nothing of that. A chalk-pit and "the quick" were the only natural features that had impressed themselves. The "quick" (still so called) was a path down the hill from the church to the road below, arched over with thorns and hornbeam; and as I saw it again, in the peaceful

light of a September afternoon, it justified all my vague affection. The church, I regretted to discover, was a hideous structure, restored to more than its native ugliness in 1855, so that I must have known it in its newest gloss; I saw my seat, west of the font, where I used to assist at baptisms; I saw also, for the first time, though without any thrill, the interior of the mysterious chamber into which the minister used to disappear in white, to emerge again in black. I found his grave in the churchyard; and noted with something of a shock that I had myself reached the age at which he seemed to me then so venerable. As I stood looking at the inscription, I heard the village children practising the Sunday Psalms; they were singing to a chant of Purcell's "I do not exercise myself in great matters that are too high for me," as I must have sung it all those years ago; and I felt that at S—— I might perhaps learn the lesson over again. We looked into the schoolroom. The mistress was not awful like the dame I had known; and everything seemed proportionately diminished. The walls were washed with blue, instead of white; and instead of a broad spaciousness with texts here and there—"Swear not at all," "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord"—there was a confused mass of pictures: Jerusalem, the Squire, lions, sheep, and curious wild-fowl.

But I saw in an outhouse the copper where the slates were boiled; and I saw the window of the little room where I used to sleep, and where I spent one very bright summer's day—"from morn to dewy eve"—learning the first page of words in Johnson's Dictionary, awful words like ab-an-don, which I still hate.

II

LICHFIELD

"LICH, a dead carcase; whence Lichfield, the field of the dead, a city in Staffordshire, so named from martyred Christians. *Salve magna parens.*" The quotation is from the great Dictionary of Samuel Johnson, Doctor of Laws. Whether the derivation holds its own in days when both philology and history are no longer experimental sciences, I am not sure; but, quite apart from philology, the description of Lichfield as a field of the dead is an admirably true one. The swarm of visitors who settle down upon the comely city every summer do not come, in the first instance, for the sake of the Cathedral, beautiful as it is, especially as seen from the Minster Pool; they come as to a Campo Santo, a field of the dead. They stare at Johnson's house in the Market Place, and try to fit a story to the bas-reliefs on his monument; they look in at the relics at the Museum; and then, if there is time, they attend a service at the Cathedral and depart. To me, who know no

living man in the place, and have the gift of short sight which helps the imagination, Lichfield is not only a field of the dead—it is a city of ghosts. If I go into the Cathedral, the congregation are all in the dress of the eighteenth century, and the Dean I see in his stall is the octogenarian Addenbrooke, whom Johnson in his "Journey to the Western Highlands" denounced for proposing to strip the lead from the Cathedral roof, though he afterwards struck out the passage. If I wander through the Museum, the solitary visitor I see there is Boswell affecting an interest in the curious collection brought together by Mr. Richard Green, the apothecary; and on closer examination I am sure the main part of the natural curiosities must be the same. The Queen of Otaheite's hair, given to a love-sick middy in 1773, must have appealed to Boswell's sentimental fancy as to mine; and the gut of a Russian fur seal, measuring sixteen yards, excited the envious admiration of us both. I have the advantage, indeed, in the Johnson memorials — the saucer from which the great man ate his morning roll; the silver buckles for which he refused to give more than two guineas; his cribbage-board, drinking-cup, and salt-cellars: though Boswell had seen these in more natural surroundings. The fine eighteenth-century mansions which are freely scattered in the prin-

cipal streets and suburbs are tenanted, for me, not by their present very respectable occupiers, but by the ladies and gentlemen who performed their orbits round the two great suns of Lichfield—Samuel Johnson and Erasmus Darwin. Let me devote this letter to some memories of these extinct satellites.

The former of the twin circles of influence can hardly be called a circle, because its centre was very seldom in Lichfield. It came into existence when the great man paid his annual visit to his native town, and then faded. It was genteel rather than literary; and, unlike the other, its members have little or no claim to remembrance on their own account. That is why, as I kick my heels in the coffee-room of the Three Crowns, it is pleasant to remember them. The Great Cham at times spoke of them respectfully, at other times with gentle sadness. On one occasion he described the inhabitants as "a city of philosophers," and said of them that they were the genteelest in proportion to their wealth and spoke the purest English. But in a letter to Mrs. Thrale he tells her: "Whatever Burney may think of the celerity of fame, the name of *Evelina* had never been heard at Lichfield till I brought it. I am afraid my dear townsmen will be mentioned in future days as the last part of this nation that was civilised."

Who were these pure-speaking philosophers who had not heard of Fanny Burney, four years after London had been taken by storm? First of all, there was a Mrs. Cobb, and her niece Miss Adey, who lived at the Friary. The Friary —a house of the Grey Friars—is one of several mediæval houses still remaining in Lichfield. It stands well back from the road—"an agreeable sequestered place," as Boswell calls it—in St. John's Street. Both Mrs. Cobb and Miss Adey are somewhat shadowy personages. The only scene in which they figure at all distinctly in Boswell's pages is on the occasion of his visit to Lichfield, when he presented himself at the Friary while the ladies were still at breakfast. In his letter to the Doctor describing the visit he says:

"I next went to the Friary, where I at first occasioned some tumult in the ladies, who were not prepared to receive *company* so early; but my *name*, which has by wonderful felicity come to be closely associated with yours, soon made all easy; and Mrs. Cobb and Miss Adye re-assumed their seats at the breakfast-table, which they had quitted with some precipitation."

Except for this one brief flash, the great Biography throws no light on the internal economy of the Friary, or on the characters of its inmates; and the letters of Johnson to his Lichfield correspondents, with their constant con-

clusion, "Make my compliments to Mrs. Cobb and Miss Adey," do not help us any more. To Miss Seward, however, the Swan of Lichfield, of whose prose carollings six volumes were given to an impatient world, we owe several references which make up in acerbity what they probably lack in truth. The occasion of her reference is the death of the elder lady and the appearance of an obituary notice:

"You would be sorryish to hear that poor Moll Cobb, as Dr. Johnson used to call her, is gone to her long home. If you saw the ridiculous, puffing, hyperbolic character of her in the public papers, it would make you stare and smile at the credence due to newspaper portraits. . . . Its author well knew the uniform contempt with which Johnson spoke both of the head and heart of this personage, well as he liked the convenience of her chaise, the 'taste of her sweetmeats and strawberries,' and the idolatry of her homage. Nauseous therefore was the public and solemn mention of Johnson's friendship for Mrs. Cobb, of whose declarations respecting her in a room full of company here, the panegyrist had so often heard [no doubt from the Swan herself]. 'How should,' exclaimed Johnson, 'how should Moll Cobb be a wit? Cobb has read nothing, Cobb knows nothing; and where nothing has been put into the brain, nothing can come out of it to any purpose of rational entertainment.'"

The Swan then proceeds to allow that Mrs. Cobb's brain had much of shrewd, biting, and humorous satire native to the soil, which had often "amused very superior minds to her own." The only

specimen of this native humour that I have been able to disinter is the calling a certain lady a "bank bill" because any one would have been glad to accept her.

The last time I was in Lichfield I stood before the decent eighteenth-century monument in St. Michael's Church to the Lady of the Friary, and was grateful that the Swan had not been asked to choose the epitaph. For the letter I have already quoted from concludes as follows: "She was a very selfish character, nor knew the warmth of friendship, nor the luxury of bestowing. Yet to her we may apply what Henry V. says of Falstaff,

'We could have better spared a better man.'"

Is there not preserved in some eighteenth-century memoir the character which the "biting and humorous satire" of this female Falstaff had given of the "very superior mind" of the Swan?

Another pair of ladies were two sisters, Mrs. Aston and Mrs. Gastrell, who lived at Stowhill. The former was a maiden lady, the latter a widow —widow, indeed, of that famous clergyman who cut down Shakespeare's mulberry-tree to vex his neighbours. According to Boswell, they "had each a house and garden and pleasure-ground prettily situated upon Stowhill, a gentle eminence adjoining to Lichfield." Thither Dr. Johnson used to "climb up" once a day on every visit

to Lichfield, and when he was in town sent them joint letters and barrels of oysters. The last preserved of the letters is one of the last he ever wrote, and is not one of the least touching in the language:

"Mr. Johnson sends his compliments to the Ladies at Stowhill, of whom he would have taken a more formal leave, but that he was willing to spare a ceremony, which he hopes would have been no pleasure to them, and would have been painful to himself."

From the letters collected by the enthusiastic industry of Dr. Birkbeck Hill, and from the pages of Boswell, the impression we get of these ladies is wholly charming. And in "Johnsoniana" there is an anecdote that Johnson would sit at a table in the window of one of the houses writing at his "Lives of the Poets" while these ladies and their sisters chatted round him—a story which would account for certain lapses in that celebrated work. Mrs. Aston in 1771 had a paralytic stroke, and from that time till Johnson's death in 1784 his letters are full of the most anxious inquiries and counsels as to her health. On October 17, 1781, he writes to Mrs. Thrale:

"On my way to Lichfield, where I believe Mrs. Aston will be glad to see me. We have known each other long, and by consequence, are both old; and she is paralytick; and if I do not see her soon, I may see her no more in this world."

As the years drew on and all the friends grew more infirm the annual visit took a sadder colour.

The only distinguishing epithets that I find Johnson applying to these ladies are that he calls Mrs. Gastrell "lively" and Mrs. Aston "a very good woman." For a more definite picture we must again betake ourselves to the imaginative lady, the Swan of Lichfield. No Johnsonian, no lover of Lichfield and its literary ladies, no natural philosopher interested in the working of the feminine literary mind, should fail to read the letter written in reply to Mr. Boswell's request for information about his hero. That gentleman did not print the letter or its contents in his memoirs because, as he said, "his book was to be a real history, and not a novel"; so that we may be grateful to the lady for preserving a copy. I have only room here for the paragraph referring to Mrs. Aston:

"You request the conversation that passed between Johnson and myself in company, on the subject of Mrs. Elizabeth Aston, of Stowe Hill, then living, with whom he always past so much time when he was in Lichfield, and for whom he professed so great a friendship. . . .

"'I have often heard my mother say, Doctor, that Mrs. Elizabeth Aston was in her youth a very beautiful woman; and that, with all the censoriousness and spiteful spleen of a very bad temper, she had great powers of pleasing, that she was lively, insinuating, and intelligent. I knew her not till the vivacity of her youth had long been extinguished, and I confess I looked in vain for the traces

of former ability. I wish to have *your* opinion, Sir, of what she was, *you* who knew her so well in her *best* days.'

"'My dear, when thy mother told thee Aston was handsome, thy mother told thee truth; she was very handsome. When thy mother told thee that Aston loved to abuse her neighbours, she told thee truth; but when thy mother told thee that Aston had any marked ability in that same abusive business, that wit gave it zest, or imagination colour, thy mother did not tell thee truth. No, no, Madam, Aston's understanding was not of any strength, either native or acquired.'"

It is not impossible that Ursa Major, who was a great stickler for truth, may have at some time expressed himself in some such way if a leading question had been put to him, both about Mrs. Aston and Mrs. Cobb; but in his authentic letters, even to Mrs. Thrale, with whom he jests occasionally about his Lichfield friends, there is no criticism of the sort; and the Swan was undoubtedly a poet. The worst Johnson has to say of these ladies' conversation is that it sometimes concerned itself with trifles:

"Lady Smith has got a new post-chaise, which is not nothing to talk on at Lichfield. Little things here serve for conversation. Mrs. Aston's parrot pecked my leg, and I heard of it some time after at Mrs. Cobb's.

'We deal in nicer things
Than routing armies and dethroning kings.'

A week ago Mrs. Cobb gave me sweetmeats to breakfast, and I heard of it last night at Stowhill." [This is the passage which the Swan so delicately introduced into her character of Mrs. Cobb.]

Of Lady Smith I know no more than the "Letters" tell—viz. that she settled at Lichfield in 1775 and "saw company at her new house." Probably her new house had received a fresh inmate before Miss Seward began in 1784 those six volumes of correspondence which have made her and her friends immortal. Minor satellites were the new Dean's lady, Mrs. Proby, "a lady that talks about Mrs. Montague and Mrs. Carter," and Miss Vyse, daughter of a Lichfield archdeacon and brother of the Dr. Vyse who asked the Swan for a verse epitaph for Garrick's monument in the Cathedral, praised it when it was sent in, "but lo!" (as the muse exclaims in a letter to William Hayley) "the monument appears with only a prose inscription!" She could not bring herself to tell her poetical friend that the prose in question was a certain sentence by Dr. Johnson about "eclipsing the gaiety of nations."

But all this time we have said nothing of the lady to whom most of Johnson's Lichfield letters are addressed, and who stood highest in his affections—Miss (afterwards Mrs.) Lucy Porter, the daughter of Johnson's wife by her first marriage with a Birmingham mercer. The Swan, with her romantic notions, would have us believe that Johnson was in love with the daughter before he proposed to the mother, and brings in evidence some verses (which were printed in Boswell's

first edition) said to have been addressed to her. But the verses were shown to have had another origin, and the story may be treated as poetry. Johnson's letters display an affection something more respectful than fatherly, but obviously sincere and deep. He writes to Miss Porter sometimes as "Dear Madam," sometimes as "My dear," sometimes as "My dearest Dear," or "My dearest Love," and signs himself "Your affectionate humble servant." Not seldom the letters reveal a pathetic eagerness that his affection should be returned:

"I had no thoughts of ceasing to correspond with my dear Lucy, the only person now left in the world with whom I think myself connected. Every heart must lean to somebody, and I have nobody but you.

"I shall take it very kindly if you make it a rule to write to me once at least every week, for I am now very desolate, and am loth to be universally forgotten."

This was immediately after the death of his mother, with whom Miss Porter had lived; but again and again the same strain comes out:

"As we daily see our friends die round us, we that are left must cling closer, and, if we can do nothing more, at least pray for one another.

"I will not suppose that it is for want of kindness that you did not answer my last letter; and I therefore write again to tell you that I have, by God's great mercy, still continued to grow better."

Miss Porter seems to have been a very Cordelia in her inability to heave her heart into her mouth, and poor Johnson longed for an occasional evidence that his warm feelings were understood:

"By the carrier of this week you will receive a box, in which I have put some books, most of which were your poor dear mamma's, and a diamond ring, which I hope you will wear as my new year's gift. If you receive it with as much kindness as I send it, you will not slight it; you will be very fond of it.

"When I go back to London, I will take care of your reading-glass. Whenever I can do anything for you, remember, my dear darling, that one of my greatest pleasures is to please you."

I find from an unpublished letter to which I have had access that the glass was duly sent. When any show of interest was made, Johnson's response to it was delighted. He is very careful to note the fact whenever his Lucy presses him to stay longer on his annual visits to Lichfield. In 1763 she had inherited from her brother (a captain in the navy) ten thousand pounds, and built herself a big house.

"I longed for Taylor's chaise;[1] but I think Lucy

[1] The chaise in question is described by Boswell as "an equipage properly suited to a wealthy, well-beneficed clergyman; drawn by four stout plump horses, and driven by two steady jolly postillions." Dr. Taylor was a man with two ambitions in life: to have the biggest bull in England and to be a dean. The first prayer the Fates probably granted, though a man was once known to say he had seen a bigger; the second they did not. He had to content himself with a prebend at Westminster. Johnson always visited his friend's rectory at Ashbourne, on his way to or from Lichfield.

did not long for it, though she was not sorry to see it. Lucy is a philosopher; and considers me as one of the external and accidental things, that are to be taken and left without emotion. If I could learn of Lucy would it be better?" [*To Mrs. Thrale, July* 17, 1771.]

"My purpose was to have made haste to you and Streatham: and who would have expected that I should be stopped by Lucy? Hearing me give Francis [his black servant] orders to take us places, she told me that I should not go till after next week. I thought it proper to comply; for I was pleased to find that I could please, and proud of shewing you that I do not come an universal outcast. Lucy is likewise a very peremptory maiden; and if I had gone without permission, I am not very sure that I might have been welcome at another time." [Ib. *Aug.* 3.]

"This was to have been my last letter from this place, but Lucy says I must not go this week. Fits of tenderness with Mrs. Lucy are not common; but she seems now to have a little paroxysm, and I was not willing to counteract it. The lady at Stowhill says, 'How comes Lucy to be such a sovereign? all the town besides could not have kept you.'"

What was the true character of this little lady? May we not suspect that a very real affection sometimes took the malign form of jealousy?

For there were many ladies at Lichfield. The following paragraph is not without significance on such an hypothesis:

"I go every day to Stowhill; both the sisters are now at home. I sent Mrs. Aston a *Taxation* and sent it nobody else, and Lucy borrowed it. Mrs. Aston since that enquired by a messenger when I was expected. I can tell nothing about it, answered Lucy; when he is to be here I suppose she'll know."

We can see something of the truth, reading between the lines of the patronising sketch drawn by Miss Seward for the amusement of one of her correspondents:

"Apropos of old maids.—After a gradual decline of a few months we have lost dear Mrs. Porter, the earliest object of Dr. Johnson's love. This was some years before he married her mother. In youth her fair clean complexion, bloom, and rustic prettiness pleased the men. More than once she might have married advantageously; but as to the enamoured affections,

> 'High Taurus' snow, fann'd by the Eastern wind,
> Was not more cold.'

"Spite of the accustomed petulance of her temper and odd perverseness, since she had no malignance, I regard her as a friendly creature, of intrinsic worth, with whom from childhood I had been intimate. She was one of those few beings

who from a sturdy singularity of temper and some prominent good qualities of head and heart, was enabled, even in her days of scanty maintenance, to make society glad to receive, and pet the grown spoiled child. Affluence was not hers till it came to her in her fortieth year, by the death of her eldest brother. From the age of twenty till that period she had boarded in Lichfield with Dr. Johnson's mother, who still kept that little bookseller's shop, by which her husband had supplied the scanty means of existence. Meantime Lucy Porter kept the best company of our little city, but would make no engagement on market-days, lest Granny, as she called Mrs. Johnson, should catch cold by serving in the shop. There Lucy Porter took her place, standing behind the counter, nor thought it a disgrace to thank a poor person who purchased from her a penny battledore.

"With a marked vulgarity of address and language, and but little intellectual cultivation, she had a certain shrewdness of understanding, and piquant humour, with the most perfect truth and integrity. By these good traits in her character were the most respectable inhabitants of this place induced to bear with kind smiles her mulish obstinacy and perverse contradictions. Johnson himself, often her guest, set the example, and extended to her that compliant indulgence which

he shewed not to any other person. I have heard her scold him like a schoolboy for soiling her floor with his shoes, for she was clean as a Dutch-woman in her house, and exactly neat in her person. Dress, too, she loved in her odd way; but we will not assert that the Graces were her handmaids. Friendly, cordial, and cheerful to those she loved, she was more esteemed, more amusing, and more regretted, than many a polished character, over whose smooth but insipid surface, the attention of those who have *mind* passes listless and uninterested."

One forgives the Swan a good deal of her verjuice for that little vignette of Lucy Porter behind the counter on market-days. She outlived Johnson rather more than a year, and bequeathed her fortune to Mr. Pearson, a clergyman of the place, who acted as her domestic chaplain. In roaming round the city to-day I came upon a monument to her in Stow Church, of which I have never seen any mention in print. It represents a sarcophagus surmounted by an urn, is of a good shape, and bears the following inscription:

"In a vault near this place are deposited the remains of Lucy Porter, who died the 13th of January 1786, aged 70 years. To whose memory, in gratitude for her liberal Acts of Friendship conferred on him, this Monument is erected by the Rev. L. B. Pearson."

It is time now to say a word about the other Lichfield coterie. The centre of the system was, as I have said, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, author of "The Loves of the Plants," and grandfather of the still more famous author of the "Origin of Species." He was as great in science as Johnson in morals, and if Johnson's "Vanity of Human Wishes" has survived the "Loves of the Plants," it is because ethics has more affinity with poetry than a theory of evolution. As verse, of the school of Pope, Darwin's poem has considerable merit, and it well deserved the parody of the anti-Jacobin. Darwin and Johnson had sufficient similarity, among many differences, to make them repellent of each other; both were dictatorial, easily moved to anger and caustic speech, and intolerant of opposition; but while Johnson was a Tory of the Tories and a Churchman of the school of Sacheverell, Darwin was a Radical and Freethinker and a correspondent of Rousseau. They rarely met, purposely avoiding each other; and from Johnson's Letters and Boswell's "Life" no one would guess that such a person as Darwin was the most prominent inhabitant of Lichfield from 1757 to 1781.

Who were Darwin's satellites? Chief among them were the Swan of Lichfield, who became his biographer; her father, the Rev. Mr. Seward, a canon of the Cathedral and editor of a very bad

edition of Beaumont and Fletcher; the Rev. Archdeacon Vyse (father of the Miss Vyse who belonged to the opposition), who is described by the Swan as "of Prioric talents in the metrical impromptu"; Sir Brooke Boothby, a Rousseau-ite, who replied to Burke's tract on the French Revolution; and on their frequent visits to the neighbourhood two gentlemen, also followers of Rousseau, but better known to posterity—Richard Lovell Edgeworth, father of the still more renowned Maria, and his friend Thomas Day, author of "Sandford and Merton." Edgeworth came to visit Darwin, not from his fame as a physician (though this was deservedly widespread), but from the rumour of his invention of a carriage on an entirely new system—an invention which, it may be added, nearly proved fatal to its inventor and several of his friends, including the Swan herself. From Lichfield Edgeworth presently secured the middle pair of his four wives. Day, though not so brilliant a figure as his friend, was more whole-hearted in his adoption of Rousseau's system; for while Edgeworth was content with bringing up his son as an Emile, Day endeavoured to return to nature one step further by providing himself with an ideal mother of his children. His matrimonial experiments are described by Miss Seward in the "Life of Darwin" with immense *gusto*, and as the book is not now in every library an extract

may be appreciated; but the reader must once again remember that the biographer was a poet. Day obtained leave to choose a fair-haired girl from an orphanage at Shrewsbury, and a brunette from the Foundling Hospital in London, in order to educate them in his principles, with a view to marrying whichever proved the more satisfactory; in the event of his marrying neither, he promised to provide a portion for the one who had been educated, and an apprenticeship for the other. While he was travelling with them and making up his mind upon their merits, the young ladies spent their time in quarrelling and having small-pox. In the end, Lucretia the brunette was apprenticed, and Sabrina came to Lichfield to be trained. This was the process as Miss Seward describes it:

"It has been said before that the fame of Dr. Darwin's talents allured Mr. Day to Lichfield. Thither he led, in the spring of the year 1770, the beauteous Sabrina, then thirteen years old, and taking a twelve months' possession of the pleasant mansion in Stowe Valley, resumed his preparations for implanting in her young mind the characteristic virtues of Arria, Portia, and Cornelia. His experiments had not the success he wished and expected. Her spirit could not be armed against the dread of pain, and the appearance of danger. When he dropped melted sealing-wax upon her arms she did not endure

it heroically, nor when he fired pistols at her petticoats, which she believed to be charged with balls, could she help starting aside, or suppress her screams."

The romance of Day's courtship and marriage should be read in Miss Seward's pages. Finding it impossible to train Sabrina in Spartan habits, offered his hand in succession to the two rs Sneyd who (in succession) subsequently ed his friend Edgeworth; the former declined ffer, the latter temporised; and there was an ertaking that the philosopher should go to s for a year, and commit himself to dancing l fencing masters. "He did so; stood daily hour or two in frames to screw back his oulders and point his feet; he practised the ilitary gait, the fashionable bow, minuets and cotillions; but it was too late." When he returned the lady ungratefully told him she preferred him in the state of nature. Happily he soon found a wife who was thoroughly devoted to him, and they lived together a life of nature and philanthropy until a horse, which he was endeavouring to break in by kindness, threw him and broke his skull. This was in 1783; but already in 1781 the Lichfield circle had broken up, owing to the second marriage of Dr. Darwin, whose wife, for unexplained but not unsuspected reasons, had taken an aversion to Lichfield society.

III

OXFORD IN THE VACATION

THE headline of my letter, most unfortunately for me, cannot fail to arouse memories of a great writer. The early Victorian poet and critic, Mr. Alaric A. Watts, once made it a charge against Charles Lamb that, on his own confession, he spent a week upon each of his essays in the *London Magazine*; thereby, as Mr. Watts went on to point out, showing his fellowship with the Cockney school, whose members were never content to write off what they had to say and have done with it, but must always be elaborating their nothings as though they were of consequence. I need hardly assure my reader that if, by taking thought and spending a week of weeks upon this letter, I could elaborate it into an Essay of Elia, I should consider the time and care well spent, and submit with resignation to the title of Cockney. But that being out of the question, I must say my say and have done with it. Only, having indiscreetly provoked remembrance of a delightful essay, I may perhaps be allowed to ask

any one who has dropped my letter to turn to it, whether he really does find there the special flavour of the University whose name it bears; for on that point I am myself sceptical. There are references in it to the Bodleian, and to Oriel and Christ Church, but so are there also to the "tall trees of Christ's"; Cam is placed by Isis as Abana by Pharpar; we hear of sizars and bed-makers, names unknown to Oxford tradition; and the only scholars spoken of are Porson and G. D., both ornaments of the sister University. Moreover, in the first form of the essay there was an interesting passage in disparagement of the Milton manuscript at the Cambridge Trinity—a passage which, with humorous appreciation, the Vice-master quotes in the preface to his admirable facsimile. And even that is not all. When the essayist—writing, be it remembered, in vacation—says, "I can rise at the chapel-bell, and dream that it rings for me," he must have been thinking of Cambridge, where they maintain the curious paradox of a term in vacation, and not of Oxford, where logic is better taught. In fact, there can be no doubt that Elia was more at home in Cambridge than in Oxford; and though, as one who by matriculation was of neither University, he attempted to give his affection to both, the attempt could not be successful. A man must be naturally Oxonian or Cantab, as he must be

Platonist or Aristotelian ; and Elia, if he had been free to choose, would have embraced the *alma mater* of his friends Wordsworth and Coleridge rather than the somewhat priggish dame who suckled Southey. And there are moments when I sympathise with his choice, just as once in very early childhood I wished to exchange my own mother for another child's mother who had red roses in her bonnet. For there are New Jerusalem glories about Cambridge to which the sons of Oxford are strangers.

> " Quite through the streets with silver sound
> The stream of life doth go ; "

and Oxonians on their first visit have been known to mistake it for the Cam. But if my heart ever thus turns for a brief moment from " my own kindly nurse," the remorse at my impiety when I come to myself is on each occasion as great as in that disgraceful episode of childhood to which I have referred.

It was St. Giles's fair that took me to Oxford this vacation, or rather it was a visit to my old friend X, for which the fair was made an excuse. " You cannot see Oxford in term-time," wrote my friend ; " the modern spirit, in form of an undergraduate, is too much with us, and too exciting ; we talk then of nothing but fours and eights and fives and elevens and other queer numerical com-

binations, the odd numbers being, as Plato says (Laws, iv. 717), sacred to the gods above, the even to those below; but come in the vacation when the mind is not so torpid, and I will show you things the like of which you never saw when you lived among them; and above all I will show you St. Giles's fair." So I went, although I had seen St. Giles's fair more than once, and, what is more, heard it; for the recollection that remained with me was of forty steam organs playing like one, and all playing different tunes. But I had a great desire to see my venerable friend, and to see Oxford through his eyes; and when he retired to the Bodleian to make one of those annotations upon Herodotus which will carry his name down to posterity, I took Mr. Wells's pretty little book, and explored many colleges, with their halls and libraries, looked at all the pictures in the Taylor and Ashmolean galleries, and all the books in Mr. Blackwell's shop, and in the lucid intervals of the weather wandered through the fine gardens of Worcester and New College and St. John's, and by special leave through that Paradise of Paradises the Warden's garden at Wadham, or paced the Broad and the High. At such moments a visitor looks about him "with the inner eye which is the bliss of solitude," and, disregarding all the evidences of modern taste in tram-line or shop-front, peoples the streets and groves with the romantic

figures of his own or a still more heroic past. When my imagination failed, as it did too quickly, I would draw upon my friend's reminiscences, which went back further than, if directly asked, he was always ready to acknowledge. On one occasion he was deploring the extreme youth of modern Heads of Houses, though he agreed with me that the fault was mending. "Why, not so long ago," said he, "we had Bulley at Magdalen, and Wayte at Trinity, and Cotton at Worcester, and Symons at Wadham (you could hardly remember him), all mature men; but now, except my own President (my friend was of St. John's), there is not a single Head over eighty; while the Dean of Christ Church is so mere a boy that he actually walks about Oxford in a——" (what vestment the very reverend gentleman was said to wear, a religious scruple prevents my repeating). "But that is the way now," he continued, "in all the professions. If a man is not a bishop or a Cabinet minister by forty, he is on the shelf." As my own age lies above that thus fixed for superannuation, this turn of the conversation left me uneasy, and, reverting to our original topic, I ventured to hint that youth, provided it was not extreme, had certain advantages even for high office. A head of a house, I suggested, might occasionally have to perform functions that could not as satisfactorily be performed by a figure-head.

Seeing my friend's colour rise, I hastened to add that what was in my mind was a story I used to hear from an old friend, a scholar of Worcester, whose interviews with his aged Provost took always the same stereotyped form: "Do you read the Holy Scriptures, Mr. B.? You know what Aristotle says: πᾶσα τέχνη καὶ πᾶσα μέθοδος. Good morning, Mr. B." I allowed that the sight of Dr. Cotton's venerable piety should have been a liberal education in itself; but it was not a classical education.

On another occasion, as we were walking together in the Physic Garden (my friend has an aversion to perambulators, and so avoids the parks), I summoned courage to ask whether there were any odd characters still remaining in Oxford. I did not forget, as I put the question, the amusing story told in Mr. Tuckwell's Reminiscences of the senior fellows of Corpus and Merton walking round Christ Church meadows and lamenting that the Originals of their younger days had vanished, when one of them (Dr. Griffith) said, "Does it not occur to you, Dr. Frowd, that *you and I* are the 'characters' of to-day?" I guessed that the *ethos* of Mr. Tuckwell's book would not have recommended it to my companion, and so risked the allusion. In reply he said, "If by 'odd characters' you mean persons around whom anecdotes crystallise, I am free to confess that I

do not think there are. In fact, many good traditional stories are in danger of being lost through the want of suitable persons to whom they may attach themselves. The cycle of tales that collected round Dr. Jenkyns of Balliol descended in a fairly complete form upon Mr. Jowett, skipping a generation, as they will probably do again." In thinking over more at leisure this dictum of my friend, it seems to me that it is only true within limits, for some stories in the Jowett cycle are concerned with his supposed indifference to theological exactness, and would not apply to Jenkyns—such a story, for instance, as the following, which was current among the undergraduates in my day. It had reached the Master's ears that Balliol men were not so successful in the examination in "Rudiments of Religion" as in the classical schools, so that he determined to call up the next batch of candidates and catechise them himself in Bible history. "Mr. Smith," he is reported to have said, "what prophet went up to heaven in a chariot of fire?" "Elijah, sir." "It is disgraceful that a scholar of this college should be so ignorant. Mr. Jones?" "Elijah, sir." "Mr. Brown?" "Elijah, sir." At this point the library boy entered, and to strike the undergraduates with shame he was appealed to. "Tell these gentlemen what prophet went up to heaven in a chariot of fire." "Elijah, sir."

Then ensued a pause; and then: "Well, gentlemen, perhaps it was Elijah." It needs no arguing that a story of that type was not traditional; and of this peculiar appropriateness are the best of the Oxford stories. The Oxford oddities, indeed, might be ranked in a hierarchy. On the lowest plane are those whose peculiarities are simply described, such as old Archdeacon Clark, whose hardy annual, the sermon on "The Unjust Steward," was the cause of inextinguishable laughter to many generations of dons and men. In the next circle would come those whose alleged eccentricity was immortalised in one story, like a certain registrar of the University, by whose bedside the angel Gabriel is said one morning to have appeared instead of his scout and intimated that the world would in some obscure but very real manner be benefited if the registrar would forgo his usual breakfast. And then above these again would rank those whose originality had all the variety of genius and created a whole cycle of stories. Of such variety in recent days was the Pater legend; and such, as I hear, are the legends which are gradually forming round the Professor of —— and the —— of ——. In an entirely distinct category must be placed the effusions of wit which embalm the memory of Henry Smith, or such sallies of fun as the clergy tell of Bishop Stubbs. A clergyman whom I met at dinner in

Oxford proved to be a great admirer of this learned and humorous prelate, and regretted that his life was not to be written. He thought that the students at Cuddesdon might at any rate collect the floating traditions about him. I rejoined that this seemed a little unlikely to be done, as the stories I had heard could not be said to leave an episcopal impression. But here I found I had applied a match to powder. "By an episcopal impression," he said, "you no doubt mean the sort of impression made by the present occupants of the bench of bishops. But allow me to remind you that the present type of bishop is simply and solely the creation of Samuel of Oxford; and Dr. Stubbs, who was (I need not remind you) a very learned historian, deliberately set himself to go behind that tradition—as far behind it, in fact, as Hugh of Lincoln, who was (you will allow) a much better model. The fact really was that Samuel himself created the type only for official occasions; but, being taken up by less rich natures—well, you know what Shakespeare says about the 'dyer's hand.' By the way, can you tell me any authentic anecdotes of the great man?"

My memory is of the reticulated order, and anecdotes fall through the meshes; but I was able to contribute one to the proposed collection. It was the morning after a banquet, and a too

solicitous friend who had sat by the bishop the evening before, happening to meet him in the street, asked whether he got home all right. The bishop looked slightly surprised at the question, but at once added, with an apparently sudden gleam of comprehension, "Oh, thank you, yes; it was only my boots that were tight." To that I may add the disconcerting reply to a verger, after a function in Chester Cathedral, who asked him, "My lord, have you any further use for the mace?" "No, take it away and put it in the rice pudding;" and the equally disconcerting reply to the railway porter's question: "How many articles, my lord?" "Thirty-nine." The latter may be an episcopal chestnut; but the following epigram I have seen with my own eyes written out in the bishop's large and beautiful hand:

"To the 'l'état, c'est moi,'
Of Louis le roi
A parallel case I afford;
Something like it, you see,
May be said about me:
Am I not the diocesan bo(a)r(e)d?"[1]

It has occurred to me that not only in the University, but in the town of Oxford, which

[1] Since this letter was written, my friend the Rev. W. H. Hutton, who owns the manuscript referred to, has printed it with other memorials in his "Letters of William Stubbs, Bishop of Oxford" (Constable).

comes into such close and not always friendly touch with the University, there may have lived, and may still survive, many odd or eccentric persons who await a Tuckwell to preserve their memorials from perishing. I came by chance upon such a one during this visit—a hairdresser, whose boast it was that he never forgot a face. He was good enough to remember mine, and fixed my epoch and college with remarkable accuracy. On my congratulating him he sighed, and said that his gift was not always appreciated. "The other day, sir," said he, "I saw in my shop a head that was very familiar; I passed in and out several times to reassure myself, while my young man was operating; and when the customer was paying me I said, 'It is a long time since we have had the pleasure of seeing you here, sir.' 'What do you mean?' said he. 'Only that I remember your face distinctly, sir—I have a gift that way; and it is a long time since I have seen it.' 'Oh,' he replied, 'you Oxford people are always trying to make out you remember us; I am quite sure you don't remember me.' 'Well, sir,' I said, 'it's my word against yours; I say I do.' 'Well, if you remember me, what's my name?' And then, sir," said the hairdresser, "I don't know how it was; but it came to me *here* (touching the back of his head): and I looked him in the face, and said, 'You are K—— of

B——' (naming a very distinguished ornament of the judicial bench). And he said——"

But I have forgotten the fair. It is held, as all the county of Oxford knows, on the first Monday after St. Giles's day, in the broad space in front of St. John's College, which, as lord of the manor, receives a moderate rent from such owners of booths as squat upon the college property, while the city takes toll of the rest. The number of pitches this year was, as I learned from my host, greater than usual—he put the number of vans at one hundred and thirty-five ; but, as I walked with him through the crowds of sightseers, I could not but feel that there was somehow a change in the spirit of the thing from the fair as I had seen it in younger days. Not that there were fewer shows, or fewer steam organs, or less gold and yellow paint—there was far more ; I saw afterwards in the local paper that one carved figure on an organ had cost the showman as large a sum as £28 ; and everywhere, instead of the flaring petroleum of my youth, there was electric light. But I could not shake off the conviction that something was radically wrong—that the glory was departed ; I seemed to detect a new spirit everywhere, materialistic, scientific, mechanical. I kept my uneasiness from my friend because I knew he would take it too much to heart. The fair exists, and has for three centuries existed, by

the goodwill of St. John's College; and it would be painful, nay, impossible, to believe that so venerable an institution would tolerate any development that might prove inimical to Church or State. But I will set down two or three instances of the kind of change to which I refer, so that the reader can judge for himself. In old days one of the most interesting features of the fair was beyond all question the ghost, which, as an old Doctor of Divinity used to say, was a standing witness to the supernatural. The ghost was not remarkable in anything but its mere ghostly quality, for it belonged to an unhealthy boy, one "poor Jim," who died to slow music in the presence of several angels, and was beyond a doubt better dead. But it was a ghost; and, as the learned divine said, it was *pro tanto* a witness to the supernatural. Then—as I am told—it became the fashion for the showman to preface his story by saying, "Ladies and Gemmen, there's no such thing as spiritalism; it's all an opcallusion." Such a cut at modern spiritualism was in itself unobjectionable; but it proved the thin end of the wedge of materialism. The temptation to explain phenomena by the theory of optical illusions was sure to spread, and now both ghosts and angels are no more. A second, and perhaps a more important, evidence of the growth of mechanical notions is seen in the disappearance

of the strolling player. Not so many years ago a company would perform a scene from "Hamlet," or "Othello," or one of the approved comedies; or the clown "would make those laugh whose lungs were tickle o' the sere" by his extemporary wit; now the cinematograph has banished the player, and the clown contents himself with hitting and eluding a leather ball fixed to a pole that swings on a pivot. A third evidence may be found in what I must call the degradation of the mountebank. How delightful he was in old days with all his blague about pill or potion and his glib astrological patter! And when I saw a placard announcing "Professor Duval, character-delineator, gifted by Nature, acknowledged by press and public to be the master in this line of business, after a life-long study, advice on health and marriage under the planet of which you are born; the date of your birth is all that is required," I had the liveliest anticipations of enjoyment. But how rudely was I disappointed. The Professor was incapable of putting two sentences together; and his whole stock-in-trade was a large cupboard divided into pigeon-holes, from which he took a printed slip and gave it to his client.

Let me nevertheless admit that, although the fair by yielding to the mechanical spirit had lost some of its original brightness, there was no lack

of merriment among the sight-seers ; they, at least, were not mechanical, and so they supplied in human interest what the shows themselves lacked. I was sorry, though not surprised, to see none of the Heads of Houses present. It is good for us all now and then to get back to mother earth ; and for no class of men is it so necessary as for those who live among ideas, like the fellows of Oxford Colleges. This, with their usual wisdom, they recognise ; and one of the most captivating sights of the fair in old days was the sight of the venerable —— of —— throwing for cocoa-nuts. To any one who was incautious enough to recognise him on such occasions he would say, "The Romans, Sir, were an imperial people : and they knew the value of the Saturnalia." Never, too, shall I forget the spectacle of a Professor of Ancient History upon the switchback ; being borne aloft and swept down again in a state of apparently frantic happiness. On that occasion our eyes met, and when he joined me subsequently he explained that, being engaged upon a description of Hannibal's passage of the Alps, he was endeavouring to gain local colour by a substitute for the exhilaration of high mountain-air. This year we had no professors. But the crowds were very human, the boys especially— from the sleek young gentleman in a Panama hat who spent a whole silver shilling in endeavouring

to tumble a celluloid ball off a jet of water, to the ragamuffin who bore a peacock feather to worry his neighbours, and occasionally bought a half-pennyworth of fish-chips, ice-cream, or brandy-snaps. On one stall I saw what seemed a tempting offer: "Look, boys, down two pins and take one prize," and I saw boy after boy look, as directed, and then turn away. On going near to investigate the cause, I discovered that the prizes were all clothes-brushes. As with the boys, so with the young men from the country: they wore their familiar air of knowingness beyond any chance of cozening. The young women from the country wore blue. Never have I seen such blues. Ethel outdid Florence in azure feats. I was interested to watch the various methods adopted by showmen to attract the attention of the crowd. Some rang bells furiously; some used drum and cymbals; others an automatic trumpet; others again used bells, drums, cymbals, and trumpet together. More artistic managers accompanied their music with dancing — quite moral dancing. I mean there was no attempt to paint the face or tire the head; it was dancing by citizens for citizens, by mothers of families for mothers of families. Before other shows, again, the funny man would disport himself. But the preludium outside, whatever its nature, had no discoverable relation to the particular entertain-

ment within. That was always the same: some assortment of living pictures; the Coronation procession, or a stag-hunting, or the eruption of a volcano, or domestic scenes. And that brings me to speak of the one feature of the fair that was distasteful. My host informed me that his college had taken the greatest pains to secure that the whole fair should be as moral as a mediæval church ale, and had even examined all the moving pictures that were to be exhibited. The sign of this anxiety was evident in many parts of the fair, where shows were advertised as "moral" or as "fit for ladies." But whether the show that I happened to choose had escaped the censor, or was not under the ægis of the college, I cannot say; the fact remains that the "domestic scenes" exhibited were neither "moral" nor "fit for ladies."

What to me, however, was the cream of the fair I have not yet mentioned; it was the one element, besides the inevitable merry-go-round and shooting gallery, that recalled what the fair used to be in its palmy days; I mean the cheap-jack. We are still a nation of shopkeepers and shop-frequenters; we buy and sell; and we like to buy cheap; so the cheap-jack appeals to our most intimate feelings. At Oxford he was represented in all his manifold variety. There was the trafficker who sold "inestimable stones, unvalued

jewels," in closed parcels, after opening a few carefully selected specimens. There was the blander cheat who handed his watch-chains round for inspection. And there was the wholesale swindler, who bludgeoned your imagination and befogged your intellect by the accumulated magnificence of his offers. "Here is a sword-stick priced five francs at the Paris Exhibition; I throw in a ring, hall-marked gold—g-o-l-d, gold —and I give a chain as a present. Now, who says a shilling for the lot?" The remarkable thing was that this gentleman seemed to find fewer customers than the rest. The sober sense of Englishmen was disturbed by such public-spirited offers, and suspected a trick, as well it might. It is a fact well known that when, for a bet, a man offered half-sovereigns for shillings for a quarter of an hour on Waterloo Bridge not a single person availed himself of the offer.

There is one joy of Oxford in the vacation upon which I have not touched. Oxford, as the wit said, is a delightful place to get out of. And so it is. On all sides lie objects of interest that tempt the feet of the curious inquirer, whether he drives the cushioned wheel or practises the almost lost art of walking. Certainly, the bicycle is not to be despised, if it were only for the distances that it brings within range. Thus, on this visit, not only did I pay my respects to

Stanton Harcourt and Yarnton, with its interesting old church and beautiful Jacobean manor-house, which Mr. Bodley has restored and adorned with gazebos and what not, in the most correct taste, but farther west to Witney and Burford, that most beautiful old town on the edge of the Cotswolds; south-west to Faringdon and the vale of Berks, where it was pleasant to see what care is taken of the White Horse; and east to Haseley and Chalgrove and Ewelme, of which last village it is enough to say that the place is as beautiful as its name.

IV

BLOOMSBURY

I HAVE been vastly gratified to observe during my present visit to Bloomsbury, that although that once secluded province is now brought by a system of omnibuses into close relation with the centres both of trade and government, it still succeeds in maintaining its characteristic independence. That such good fortune may long continue must be the wish of every reflecting person; but no one can be blind to the dangers that threaten. In the first place the City, with imperial indifference to frontiers, has made a raid upon certain streets for its own use as a cœnobium. The traveller who walks through Bloomsbury between eight and ten in the morning will find the streets leading to Holborn full of youths moving towards the south-east. He will observe that they are in regulation dress, as it were a civilian army; and he will admit that their spruce and healthy looks are a credit to the tonic air and gravel soil of the *provincia* they have annexed. Between five and seven at night he will find the

same army returning to its evening quarters; which are the so-called "places" or avenues to the various squares of which Bloomsbury consists. Still later in the evening, if he is abroad, he may see them grouped at their open doors smoking cigarettes, and ogling such of the passers-by as take their fancy; or watching the acrobatic nimbleness of some Fifine whom a too long-suffering police may have allowed to dance before them to the melody of a barrel organ. These young men, he should be told, are *in* Bloomsbury but not *of* it; they are no more indigenous than the German youth who come over in equal crowds to wait upon them in their boarding-houses, learn the language, and return.

While the decorum of Bloomsbury is thus menaced by the manners proper to City clerks, its simplicity is threatened from the opposite quarter of the compass by the rising tide of luxury which swells up from Piccadilly through Long Acre to Southampton Row, where a new race of shops displays the all but latest Bond Street fashions in jewels and millinery. It is my hope that the inbred integrity of Bloomsbury may purge off this infection as it has resisted the other; and my confidence is not without grounds. For this province has long tolerated in its midst an Oriental colony which attempts to compensate the gloom of our northern skies by clothing itself in all the

prismatic glories of an Eastern sunset; and our own people, while delighting in such occasional oases of colour in their grey streets, which carry on the relief afforded by the geraniums in the window-boxes, have shown hitherto no tendency to depart in their own persons from their inherited sumptuary traditions. But the tide of luxury, as I say, is indubitably rising in Bond Street and among English women; and it is only too possible that the swell may reach the provinces. It may perhaps serve to put somewhat more upon their guard our Bloomsbury husbands and fathers, who still think of Paris as the siren of luxury, if I quote a few sentences from a letter contributed lately to a Parisian newspaper by its London correspondent about the summer fashions of Bond Street.

"Jamais, je crois, les Anglaises n'ont été si follement élégantes; je dis follement avec préméditation, car cette orgie de robes ajourées, de dentelles et de gaze, de mousseline de soie, les plus immaculées et les plus légères, dans ce pays et cette ville où tout se salit sous la fumée, entraîne nécessairement une dépense effrénée. L'air indifférent, les femmes parées descendent Bond Street, à 11 heures du matin, en robe de crêpe de Chine blanc . . . il n'y en a pas une ainsi, il y en a dix, il y en a cent! Tout ce tralala somptueux surprend un peu les yeux habitués à la pondéra-

tion parisienne, à cet ajustement entre la parure et l'occasion ; ici, point, c'est la saison ; qu'il soit midi ou cinq heures, que ce soit la rue, le salon, ou le parc, c'est tout comme ; les bannières sont déployées ! "

The writer of this letter then goes on to amuse the Parisian ladies with an account of the follies into which English society has been led by the game of Bridge. "Le besoin," says our French observer, "le besoin d'émotions fortes, le besoin insatiable d'argent allant toujours croissant, le Bridge est venu servir ces deux passions, et l'état d'âme de toutes ces grandes dames esclaves de la table de jeu n'est vraiment pas édifiant."

Bloomsbury was not built until the last great aristocratic house was closed as a gambling hell, so that the passion for gaming is not in its blood, and I have little fear of its succumbing to this dolorous form of demoralised whist ; but the passion for dress is universal, and on this head I feel less assured.

It was the brightest and the hottest day of the summer on which I set out for Bloomsbury. I came out of Kent, and on my way had witnessed several curious effects of the heat wave ; the most singular of which I will take leave to recount. A gentleman, my *vis-à-vis* in the railway carriage, plainly from his air and dress a family lawyer, after mopping his face several times with a hand-

kerchief, suddenly produced from his pocket a large parcel of twenty-pound banknotes—I should estimate that there were two thousand pounds' worth in his hand—and proceeded to count them. Feeling sorry for this temporary collapse of professional caution, I took as little notice as possible, and endeavoured to empty my face of all expression, both of surprise and concern. Another evidence I met with of the unusual degree of the temperature was less pathetic. I had ordered my cabman to drive along the Embankment instead of the Strand, both for the sake of what breeze might come up the river, and also because humanity on the Embankment commonly displays more originality than that which crowds the Strand. (I may mention that it is my habit always to drive in a four-wheeled cab, both to avoid risk of accident from the horse falling on the slippery asphalte and for the opportunity of observation given by the leisureliness of transit; and I usually, in good weather, ask leave of the driver to share his box. On this occasion I was fortunate in finding him a person of intelligence.) On the Embankment, then, I saw three young urchins who had stripped to the skin and were enjoying the luxury of a shower-bath under the grateful fountain raised by the County Council water-cart; while a middle-aged man, who had probably never washed since his mother last

washed him, was lecturing them on the grave impropriety of their conduct. It was a scene for the humorous pencil of Wilkie. I regret to say that vice triumphed, and as we turned the corner of Surrey Street I saw the poor little Cockney Cupids reluctantly resuming their shirts.

We proceeded on our way to Bloomsbury up Drury Lane, which, despite its modern association with pantomime, is sacred in my memory to John Donne and the poor little Anne Drury whom he celebrated in an annual poem as payment for board and lodging. My driver was eloquent about the new causeway that was to unite the Strand with Holborn. I was less inclined to be exultant. It seemed somehow of evil omen for the independence of Bloomsbury—"in Tiberim defluxit Orontes" I thought; the Thames cannot but swamp the New River. I had asked to be allowed to make the descent upon Bloomsbury through Southampton Row, where William Cowper used "to giggle and make giggle" with his cousins, the daughters of Ashley Cowper, when he was young and light-hearted; but its southern extremity was "up" and the houses in process of demolition for the giant causeway already referred to; so that we passed into it below Theobald's Road. From this point the prospect was charming. A hundred years seemed at once wiped out. The trees projecting into the road on the

left from square beyond square, and on the right the fine plane rising from the pavement at the corner of Tavistock Place, blocked out all the distance, and gave the impression of woods beyond woods stretching up to Highgate; as in the old days, before the industrial revolution had turned all those pleasant fields into one large honeycomb of cruel habitations. But my ecstasy was short-lived. Suddenly on the right there reared itself a sort of Aladdin's palace in porcelain; and, in reply to my amazed questioning, I heard a strange story, which I found it hard to credit, of the determination of the reigning Duke of Bedford to cover his slice of the habitable globe with *terra cotta*, that being the only material that in our smoky climate preserves its red colour; and Russell means red. For a confirmation of his legend my driver pointed to the other houses in the square; where a thin red line of *terra cotta* had crept round all the doors and windows.

I was surprised at the number of vehicles we met of all descriptions; and remarked upon it; for in my recollection the northern part of Bloomsbury had been singularly peaceful. "Ah!" said my driver, "you see it's all along of the Markis. There used to be postës at the bottom of Woburn Place, by Pancrases church; but the Markis he wanted to get quick from his station to the House of Lords, and so he had 'em knocked down.

There was a poet," he continued, dropping his voice, "who bought a house in Woburn Place, for the quiet like, just before the Markis knocked down the postës; and the scamper of the cabs so preyed on his mind that he threw himself out of the third floor winder and was taken up a corpse." "No, no," I said, "you are pulling my leg; no one but a poet-laureate could afford to buy a house. Besides, all the Bloomsbury poets live at the British Museum."

Only one other incident diversified this eventful drive. A few doors from the corner of Tavistock Place, where once stood a modest mansion, famous as the place where the earth was weighed by the astronomer Francis Baily, I saw an immense pile, made, so far as I could distinguish at a glance (and as I have since ascertained), of honest red brick, with a band of plaster-work under very broad eaves. A sudden fear rose in me that Bloomsbury had been invaded by aristocracy, that some great peer had built himself a town house here, preferring salubrity to fashion. "What is this big place?" I asked. "That's what we wants to know," said my driver. "I have a mate, what lives round the corner in Hunter Street, and we talks it over. It's what they *calls* a Settlement. I say it's a music-hall; for I've heard 'em often and often a singing as I've come by with a late fare from the theayter; but my

mate says it's a sort of Rowton House for broken-down swells. They gets their board, and they takes it out in concerts." In the minute and a half before we reached my destination, I tried to explain to my companion the nature of a "Settlement"; but at the idea that it was a religious and philanthropic institution to benefit the poor my Jehu remarked impolitely that now I was pulling *his* leg.

When night brought a certain coolness, I rambled with a heavy heart to see what of the old Bloomsbury still survived; and I was consoled. Under the light of the moon and the excellent electric light of the district, St. Pancras Church looked almost Hellenic, and I understood the feelings of the Greek valet who, as tradition tells, spent every holiday in gazing at it and thinking of Athens and the Erechtheum. At the other end of the district St. George's Church was no less consoling. Horace Walpole called the steeple crowned with its statue of King George I. "a masterpiece of absurdity," and Hogarth introduced it into the background of his "Gin Lane," not, I imagine, out of compliment; but I delighted in it as a child; and it is an excellent symbol of the fine Whig loyalty which gave us our Protestant succession and our National Anthem. Bloomsbury has continued to be loyal and Protestant even to a fault. Its masquerade or

"carnival" after the relief of Mafeking took, it is reported, four hours to pass a given spot; and I am told that the proposal in the borough council to alter the spelling of the name to Bloemsbury, when Bloemfontein was entered, was only negatived on account of the waste in printed forms that such an alteration would have entailed. I paid a flying visit also to the other St. George's Church, at the corner of Queen's Square, which is sacred to the memory of Thackeray's Philip.

The statues, I rejoiced to find, were still in their old places. Francis, the fifth and agricultural Duke of Bedford, was sitting, as I remembered, dressed like Cincinnatus, with his hand on the plough, and looking along Bedford Place at Charles James Fox, who, to keep his ducal friend in countenance, had also assumed the toga. This Whig convention of Roman dress has been ridiculed, but it is a recognised symbol of patriotism; and it might well have been permitted to continue until male attire became once more picturesque.

The history of Bloomsbury can be very simply told. The district was originally a stretch of open fields lying behind two noble mansions, Southampton House and Montague House, which stood side by side on the north of Great Russell Street. The earlier of these, Southampton House,

was built by the fourth earl of that title, the son of Shakespeare's patron, who owned the manor anciently called Blemundsbury, and wished to move west from his older mansion in Holborn. He built at the same time what we now know as Bloomsbury Square, of which his own house occupied the north side; and the new square, the first of its kind, became one of the sights of London. Pepys went out to see it in October 1664, and pronounced it a "very great and noble work," and the more critical Evelyn praises it a few months later: "Din'd at my Lo. Treasurer's the earle of Southampton in Blomesbury, where he was building a noble Square or Piazza, a little Towne." Montague House was built fifteen years after. Evelyn records his first visit to it on November 5, 1679. Southampton House, with the Bloomsbury manor, passed to the Bedfords, and became Bedford House, through the marriage of Lady Rachel Wriothesley, one of the coheiresses, with William Lord Russell. The quidnuncs tell us that the Duke of York had wished to have Lord Russell beheaded in Bloomsbury Square, in front of his own house, but that Charles refused so indecent a request. From Southampton House, Lady Rachel witnessed the burning of Montague House in January 1705–6, and was able to give its unfortunate inmates shelter for the night. The house that replaced

this was bought by the Government in 1753 for a British Museum; and the present Museum occupies its site. The fields behind Southampton and Montague houses were long famous as a place for duels.

> "If you're displeased with what you've seen to-night,
> Behind Southampton House we'll do you right,"

says an epilogue of 1691. "To go behind Montague House" is a still more usual euphemism.

It is interesting to look through a series of last-century maps of London, and see how the new district slowly crept north. The first houses to be built at the end of the seventeenth century were those on the north side of Great Russell Street, west of Montague House. These were fashionable because of the fine view of Hampstead and Highgate to be had from their gardens. Horace Walpole writes to Lady Ossory about Johnson's friend, Topham Beauclerk, that "he has built a great library in Great Russell Street that reaches half-way to Highgate." Great Ormond Street, on the other side of Southampton Row, was built in the first years of the new century, and was for a time as fashionable as Great Russell Street, and for an identical reason. The Gardens in Jeffrey's map of 1735 stretch back to Lamb's Conduit. Queen's Square adjoining was built about the same time, and called after Queen Anne, but the statue in the

square garden representing a lady balancing a crown on her head is Queen Charlotte. The square was left open to the north so that the view should not be interrupted; of which an interesting and ridiculous memorial survives in the fact that, though Guilford Street now completely obstructs the view, the square can only be entered from the south end. In a map of 1749 appears the Foundling Hospital, an oasis in the desert to the N.E. In 1765 appears Lord Baltimore's house, afterwards the Duke of Bolton's, which later was built into Russell Square at its S.E. corner. The name of Bolton House is still borne by one of the houses occupying the site. In Cary's map of 1787 we find for the first time Bedford Square, and Gower Street running as far as Francis Street; and in 1801 we [illegible] Russell and Tavistock Squares. These squares owe their existence to the Cincinnatus already referred to, who in 1800 demolished Bedford House, and laid out the gardens as a building estate for houses of the first respectability. The builder was James Burton, whose name is commemorated by Burton Crescent.

The proximity of Bloomsbury to the Inns of Court made it, in its first spring of youth, a colony of successful lawyers. The histories of London record the dwelling-places of many chancellors and judges; and those whom chan-

cellors and judges interest may consult the invaluable works of Messrs. Peter Cunningham and Walter Thornbury—"I wol not han to do of swich matere." To simple minds it will be more interesting to recall some of the literary associations of the district. Among Gray's letters there are a few written in 1759 from Mr. Jauncey's in Southampton Row, where he had taken lodgings, in order to read in the recently opened British Museum; and these help us to realise the contrast between then and now in several particulars.

"I am now settled in my new territories commanding Bedford Gardens [*i.e.* the gardens of Bedford House], and all the fields as far as Highgate and Hampstead, with such a concourse of moving pictures as would astonish you; so *rus-in-urbe-ish* that I believe I shall stay here, except little excursions and vagaries, for a year to come. What though I am separated from the fashionable world by broad St. Giles's and many a dirty court and alley, yet here is air, and sunshine, and quiet, however, to comfort you; I shall confess that I am basking with heat all the summer, and I suppose shall be blown down all the winter, besides being robbed every night; I trust, however, that the Musæum, with all its manuscripts and rarities by the cart-load, will make ample amends for all the aforesaid inconveniences.

"I this day past through the jaws of the great leviathan [the skeleton of a whale] into the den of Dr. Templeman, superintendent of the reading-room, who congratulated himself on the sight of so much good company. We were, first, a man that writes for Lord Royston; secondly, a man that writes for Dr. Burton, of York; thirdly, a man that writes for the Emperor of Germany, or Dr. Pocock, for he speaks the worst English I ever heard; fourthly, Dr. Stukeley, who writes for himself, the very worst person he could write for; and, lastly, I, who only read to know if there be anything worth writing, and that not without some difficulty."

In the matter of admission tickets to the Reading-room of its Museum, Bloomsbury has been compelled by a democratic Legislature to depart from its first excellent Whig principles; with the result that, as everybody who reads there takes to writing (for writing and reading are now universally taught), the books on the Museum shelves propagate themselves as fast as rabbits. Other interesting eighteenth-century figures whose memories haunt Bloomsbury are Hogarth and Handel, both of whom were among the promoters of the Foundling Hospital. Hogarth was a governor and guardian. He persuaded his friends to decorate it with pictures, and himself presented his admirable portrait of the philan-

thropic founder, Captain Coram. On another occasion he gave it certain lottery tickets which won his picture of "The March of the Footguards to Finchley Common" in 1745. Handel presented the chapel with its organ, and gave there the first performance in England of the "Messiah." A notice of the concert preserved at the hospital desires gentlemen to come without swords and ladies without hoops. I have no space to enlarge on the merits of this institution. Its story forms a curious chapter in the history of social science, and may be read in the books; but the place itself, the buildings with their fine spreading spaciousness, the picture-hung galleries, the chapel with its substantial pews and beautifully carved pulpit, the blue broadcloth jackets and red waistcoats of the boys, and the white caps and aprons of the girls, present the lively image of that Georgian time which had leisure for its philanthropy as for everything else. Leisure is dead in the greater part of London; but it survives at present with kindred virtues in this province of Bloomsbury.

The Victorian men of letters who have lived here for any length of time have come under its spell. It would have been better for Carlyle both as a man and an author if he had stayed on in Woburn Buildings instead of migrating to Chelsea. One dares hardly conjecture how Shelley might have been humanised if he had gone on living in

Marchmont Street. Bloomsbury can boast, however, of two great novelists whose broad humanity, inspired as I think by the genius of the place, has already benefited several generations of readers. But how long, in an age of *terra cotta*, will Bloomsbury be allowed to bless the world with its dignified calm? As I write, Great Coram Street, where Thackeray lived in the first impressionable years of authorship, is being yellow-washed as though it were in Bayswater; and the site of Dickens's house behind Tavistock Square is occupied by a huge board bearing the legend: "This desirable plot of land to be let on a building lease."

V

CANTERBURY

I HAD hoped to pay a visit to Canterbury on the occasion of the enthronement of the Archbishop. At the last moment I was prevented, and a friend who was going undertook to write me an account of what he saw and heard. His letter was not what I expected it to be; but perhaps for that reason it may prove the more interesting, so I give it.

. . . . . .

We made our journey from Victoria Station in the ordinary way, and saw the pageant; but what chiefly lives in my memory is not the service in the Cathedral, which, except for the procession up and up the many stairs from nave to presbytery with which it opened, was not remarkable, nor the luncheon afterwards, though this had its *memorabilia*, but the journey down and back again. In that respect it recalled—*magnis componere parva*—the famous pilgrimage, personally conducted by Harry Baily of the Tabard in Southwark, which numbered Chaucer among its members. In my department of the train we

were all laymen but one, a balance of parties which, while it represented in little the true constitution of the Church, enabled us to discuss affairs with a good deal of freedom; for we did not feel ourselves hindered by the presence of a single clergyman from expressing our genuine convictions to each other on any question of Church policy that arose; and, as we were all members of the House of Laymen, ecclesiastical questions had an interest for us. Happily the clergyman in question did not resent our liberty of speech. On the contrary, he appeared to some of us to claim an even greater degree of liberty for himself, and it was curious to discover that he seemed to take the same half-amused interest in our way of looking at things as we are accustomed to take in that of the clergy. I forget how the remark arose—detached it has an air of provocation which it had not at the time—but one of our party mentioned that he kept a book in which he recorded the eccentricities of his parson; on which our clerical member replied that he was greatly interested to hear it, because he had for years kept a journal of the doings and sayings of his churchwardens and other Church laymen, for the purpose of arriving by an induction at what he called "the lay point of view." "Especially," he said, "I have long tried to come to some appreciation of how you gentlemen of

the laity feel towards us. I recognise that you have no feelings but those of duty and affection towards the Church of England; indeed, you are always telling us that you *are* the Church of England, an expression which reminds one of that cry which Shakespeare has put into the mouth of the mob in *Coriolanus*—

'The people are the city'—

the fact being, in the one case as in the other, that while undoubtedly the greater part you are not the whole. But while loving the Church you are not over friendly to the clergy. I recognise that you cannot have any conscientious objection to the existence of a clerical order, because that order is still largely composed of your family connections. If your family living has not dwindled away to a mere pittance you still expect a son to take it; and you do not infer that his doing so will affect injuriously either his intellect or his moral character. Wherein then lies our offence? I have sometimes thought it attaches to the clerical dress. The soldier and the lawyer keep their official dress for official occasions; we, even in ordinary life, wear our coats and collars with a difference; and the exclamation of a well-known lay peer to his companion on meeting a bishop in his walking cassock, vulgarly called an apron, 'Would you go about dressed like that for

£20,000 a year?' points to some irritation at our customary habit. If that were all it might be worth while to drop it. It took many generations of archdeacons in mediæval times before the English clergy could be induced to surrender the ordinary dress of laymen, and they would recur to it without much pressure. But I fear the quarrel with our dress is only a symptom, not the malady itself, which is, I am driven to believe, an instinct in the blood, inherited from savage times, and times indeed even more remote."

As our clerical companion seemed to hesitate from fear of offending us we pressed him to proceed, at the same time assuring him that we at any rate cherished no animosity to his order.

"Well," he said, "the anti-clerical feeling of which I speak would always be repudiated by laymen individually, and quite justifiably, because it could not be put into words, being indeed not dictated by reason; but that it is nevertheless a very real and operative feeling the Kenyon-Slaney clause sufficiently proves.

"It is, however, an instinct, below the level of reason,—these multitudinous actions always reveal instinct,—and I take it to be a survival from the feeling of the savage for his tribal medicine man. The medicine man is regarded as necessary, and so he receives many compliments and a few presents; also he is feared as the wielder of

supernatural powers; but he is not loved. All priesthoods, in every age and nation, have inherited some of this ill-feeling. In Protestant times, since the parson left conjuring, he is no longer feared, but enough of the old instinct remains to keep the class unpopular, even though every individual member of the class might be voted a good fellow. But," he proceeded, "I think this instinct, to 'go for' us, which, for shortness, I may call the 'Kenyon-Slaney' instinct, lies deeper yet. We have all seen, probably, how the sound members of a herd will 'go for' a sick cow. They could not explain why, any more than the Kenyon-Slaney majority could explain their vote. But the fact is that a parson is looked at as a man under some disability. In old days he was not allowed to marry. Even now he is not expected to hunt or shoot. Moreover, he must not use profane oaths; and if a certain type of story makes its appearance in the smoking-room he takes his leave. He is not quite, therefore, as other men are; he is a disabled member of the herd, a sick cow. And so the rest are apt to prod him with their horns; they put him on the stage in ridiculous situations, or they make fun of him in novels, or pass Kenyon-Slaney clauses. It is all a very interesting survival of old-world brutality, using the word in its strict sense."

There was, of course, no meeting this indict-

ment, because from first to last, both as to the existence of the feeling and as to its explanation, it was purely hypothetical. And so what reply there was came in a dropping fire from one and another. "My only quarrel with the clergy as a profession," said one, "is that they so often don't know their business. They arrange church music without knowing good from bad; and they preach without having learned to speak. Why don't they take lessons in oratory?" "Simply, I think, because they are Englishmen," said the parson. "You might ask the same question about barristers. Perhaps also want of money has something to do with it. Modern Englishmen will pay as much money as is wanted for most charitable objects; but ask men to endow a training college for the clergy, and they shut their purses with a snap." "*My* quarrel with the clergy," said another, "is that they want us to go to church and hear sermons. I once heard a learned professor say—he was a clergyman too—that the notion of going to church began the ruin of ecclesiastical architecture, and that the ruin had been completed by the notion of hearing sermons. The Greeks, who knew what architecture was, very wisely stayed outside their temples altogether. The mediæval people at least kept their churches empty and spacious; we have blocked them up with pews." "Golf," replied

the parson, "with the week-end holiday to which it has given rise, seems likely to bring back the Hellenic golden age. Our churches will soon be as empty as the Parthenon. But I entirely agree with you that there is too much preaching of a very commonplace sort, and I agree that pews are *anathema*. If services were reduced to a reasonable length, and sermons confined to Lent and Advent, no seats would be required, except for the feeble. The modern custom of stretching out matins by singing the canticles to elaborate services is responsible for some decay of devotion. The practice was begun in order to attract, as if worship could ever be made attractive; and now that music has failed, some ecclesiastics are trying the megaphone and the magic lantern. Church Congresses have begun to ask why people do not go to church; a more important question is why they do go."

This turn of the conversation seemed to leave my lay brethren rather uneasy, for Englishmen do not like talking about their religion, upon which we have, as a rule, somewhat vague ideas. Presently the parson added, "There can be no doubt that what the Church of England wants is a thundering good persecution; it would do it good to discover what it would go to the stake for. Having settled our creed, we could then settle our worship." By this time we were coming

into Canterbury, to the considerable relief, as I think, of the majority of the party. After the function, when I had paid my tribute of respect to the various objects of interest in the town, not forgetting the Persian cat in the precincts, and had made my way, in a heavy shower, to the railway station, I caught sight of the same clergyman on the platform, and shadowed him until he had chosen his carriage, when I entered after him. However, he was not moved to deliver his soul a second time. The only fragment of his conversation that remains in my memory was an outburst directed against a fellow-traveller who said that bishops were, as a rule, "over-housed"—that the successors of the Apostles should not live in palaces—and that the late Archbishop had set a good example by selling Addington.

"You will perhaps remember (he began) a dictum of Leonardo da Vinci's, that living in a large house inclines you to take large views. Nothing is so necessary to the English Church at the present time as large-mindedness in its bishops ["Except a persecution," I added mentally], and therefore it is simple folly at this crisis to contract their dwellings, if there is any truth in the dictum of the great philosopher painter. For my own part I profoundly believe it, and, with the assistance of Queen Anne's Bounty, I have considerably enlarged my rectory house in ——shire. More-

over I make a point of accepting every invitation I receive to stay in great houses, hoping thereby to extend the horizon of my thought. I am glad that a bishop's house is still called a palace ; there is something spacious in the very word ; and whenever it has been my misfortune to lose myself in the wandering mazes of their hospitable labyrinths I have consoled myself by the reflection that my loss was their gain. Why (he went on), you provide at vast expense open spaces in all large towns for your citizens ; you send trainfuls of city-bred people into the country, in order that their thought may not be limited by four square walls ; and is not a prelate deserving of as much consideration ? No, sir ; if we want our bishops to be bishops indeed we must not let the Ecclesiastical Commissioners yield to the parrot cry of the moment, and make a few thousand pounds and a cheap and evanescent popularity for themselves by selling Lambeth, and Fulham, and Farnham, and the rest to the Papists or the American millionaire."

His interlocutor was about to reply, but he cut him short.

"I know what you are about to say—that it is not Lambeth but Addington that has been sold, and that a new house has been provided at Canterbury. My dear sir, Addington is the thin end of the wedge ; and the planting of the new

country house at Canterbury only intensifies the blunder. What has the metropolitan of England to do with a provincial town? He has a suffragan for his domestic diocese. We want our archbishops to think, and for thought they want quiet. If you were to rebuild the Benedictine monastery, and make the Archbishop abbot, as in old days, I could understand your proceeding. But do you expect a bishop, much more an archbishop, to be at quiet if you plant him down in a cathedral close and next door to a dean? You, of course, as a layman have the layman's notion of a bishop; your ideal is the type created by that good man Bishop Fraser at Manchester, the bishop always in evidence, always giving prizes or speaking on platforms, or addressing working men in the dinner hour, with three sermons on Sundays at different churches in the diocese,—the bishop whose study is his motor-car."

My impression is that the reverend gentleman in this diatribe did some injustice to my order. Certainly we like bishops to be busy men, but we attach even more weight to certain negative characteristics. The highest praise we give as a rule to an archbishop is that he is a man "with no nonsense about him." Professor Bryce, a typical layman, lays it down in an essay upon Archbishop Tait that "an archbishop must first

and foremost be a discreet and guarded man, expressing few opinions, and those not extreme ones." That is excellently said. But moderation is not the only virtue of a great prelate; still more important is it that he should judge by the common standards, and not have interests and aims which are not those of the ordinary layman. Mr. Bryce says "you must know where to find him." It is an unfortunate thing that the archbishops who have made the most mark in history, or at least the most noise in the history books, have been men of quite a different stamp, men whom it is happily inconceivable that the most ecclesiastically-minded prime minister should appoint to-day—such men as Dunstan, Lanfranc, Anselm, Becket, Stephen Langton, Arundel, Warham—whereas the archbishops dear to laymen are apt to be forgotten as soon as they are buried. The prelate who has always seemed to me to concentrate all the virtues which a layman looks for in the primatial chair was a Dr. Thomas Herring, who, after passing through the important office of Preacher at Lincoln's Inn, held the sees successively of Bangor, York, and Canterbury when George the Second was king. He was a man, take him for all in all, we shall not look upon his like again. For one thing he had, within the limits of the Protestant fold, a most catholic mind. It is said of him that

"he abhorred every tendency to the Athanasian controversy." When a clamour followed the publication of Hume's history on the ground of its free-thinking opinions, he wrote to him not to be discouraged. With Dissenters he was on the easiest terms, being willing to revise the Articles in their interest, and to interchange pulpits, as the first step to their comprehension in the national Church.

"I think it happy (he wrote to his brother) that I am called to this high station at a time when spite, and rancour, and narrowness of spirit are out of countenance, when we breathe the benign and comfortable air of liberty and toleration, and the teachers of our common religion make it their business to extend its essential influence and join in supporting its true interest and honour."

His epitaph is thus written by his friend Dr. Jortin, the well-known author of the life of Erasmus:—

"He had piety without superstition, and moderation without meanness; an open and liberal way of thinking, and a constant attachment to the cause of sober and national liberty, both civil and religious. Thus he lived and died, and few men ever passed through this malevolent world better beloved or less censured than he."

A recent publication of the Historical Manuscripts Commission[1] contains a series of letters from the Archbishop which will be new to the

[1] "Report of Manuscripts in Various Collections," vol. i. p. 226.

world, as they are now first printed from the originals in the Canterbury archives; and I give some extracts because, apart from their intrinsic interest and that of their subject, they illustrate Jortin's fine epitaph and shed light upon the character which, as I have said, I regard as, from a layman's point of view, that of an ideal archbishop. The letters concern a proposal for the translation of St. Anselm's remains to Aosta.

(1.) Archbishop Herring to the Dean of Canterbury.

Dear Mr. Dean, — I had a Request communicated to me to Day of a very singular Nature: and it comes from the Ambassador of a great Catholic Prince. Arch Bishop Anselm, it seems, lies buried in our Cathedral, and the King of Sardinia has a great Desire to be possess'd of his Bones, or Dust & Coffin. It seems he was of the Country of Oost, the Bishop of which has put this Desire into the King's Head, who, by the by, is a most prodigious Bigot, and in a late Dispute with Geneva gave up Territory to redeem an old Church. You will please to consider this Request with your Friends, but not yet capitularly. You will believe I have no great Scruples on this Head, but if I had I would get rid of them all if the parting with the rotten Remains of a Rebel to his King, a Slave to the Popedom, & an Enemy to the married Clergy (all this Anselm was) would purchase Ease and Indulgence to one living Protestant. It is believed, that a Condescension in this Business may facilitate the way of doing it to thousands. I think it is worth the Experiment, & really

for this End I should make no Conscience of palming on the Simpletons any other old Bishop with the Name of Anselm.

your affectionate Friend
T. CANT.

LAMBETH HOUSE,
Dec. 23, 1752.

(2.) THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR MR. DEAN,—Count Perron has been with me just now, and signified his Master the K of Sardinia's request as to the Coffin and Bones of ArchBp Anselm. The Count is desirous to apply to the Dean & Chapter of Canterbury in the most respectful Manner, and most agreeable to them. Upon which Subject I told him I would consult you. The Count intimated that if any Thing is found and a removal made, it will be necessary for him to be upon the Spot an ocular Witness in order to testify in the most authentical Manner the reality of this pretious Deposit.

I suppose the old Tomb has ponderous & marble Jaws so that it will make some noise to effect this important Work, but sure you have no Protestant Virgers that can look upon this as Diana of the Ephesians. This you will consider. I have said nothing to the Count, but declared your and my Readiness.

yr affect Friend.

LAMBETH HOUSE,
Jan. 6, 1753.

(3). S. S. TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE,—I should have sooner acknowledg'd the Receit of your Grace's appointment of me to preach at Whitehall Mar. 30, which Duty I shall

be careful to attend, but that the Dean has this Day or two taken up my Thought with two Letters of your Grace's concerning ABp Anselm. I went yesterday morning by his order with your Letters to the Prebendaries, to ask them to meet the Dean capitularly to agree to a search. But Dr Holcombe Dr Ayerd and Dr Walwyn are confined at Home by Indispositions, that We cannot at present meet in any one Place. The Dean told me just now, that He intended to write to your Grace to have the Affair a little deferred.

As this will occasion some stop in the proceeding, I beg your Grace will give me leave to submit to your Grace what, I think, I find concerning Anselm.

[Here follows an account of his several burials and translations.]

And surely this new Shrine, and its Contents as Becket's shrine, St. Dunstan's and all the other Shrines were disposed of at the Reformation.

I shd hence think it impracticable to find Anselm's Coffin, Dust, or Bones.

I have examin'd his Chapel, there is no appearance of any Stone or Monument that can be thought to concern him, nor in the Undercroft beneath it.

All this I hinted to the Dean and took the Liberty to say further, that I feared our undercroft had since the Reformation been in so neglected a State, that I could not say even that it could be desirable to have a foreign Personage in high character take the offence at our Manner of using it, which his coming to have an ocular Inspection and Examination of it would surely give One of his Communion.

Thus far I have gone with the Dean: I said no more for he seem'd not pleas'd with me—but I am prompted to venture to offer to your Grace's Inspection what was further on my Mind.

Whether, tho' I think I am sure it cannot be found, the searching for, to authenticate in the manner designed, one who was canoniz'd, had his altars, and his Day of service, I think it was the 23 of May, may not be considered in a further view than that of looking for the Remains of an old ABp only to be removed, & be deposited in his Native Country.

I hope I do not offend your Grace herein, & would humbly beg my perhaps very injudicious Sentiment may be confined only to your Grace's favourable Thoughts of me, for I should not desire to venture it the censure of any one more severe than I am sure your Grace will be to me.—I am, May it please your Grace, with the greatest sincerity of Duty, your Grace's most obedient and most humble Servt

S. S.

S. S., whether he be Samuel Stedman or Samuel Shuckford, both of whom, as Dr. Poole tells us, were prebendaries at this date, has so wrapped up his "injudicious Sentiment" that even if his Grace of Canterbury penetrated his meaning it escapes us a century and a half later. Was he a Jacobite and High Churchman who had fallen on the evil days of Sir Robert Walpole, and wished to preserve undesecrated the tomb of a canonised saint by hinting to the Archbishop that even he, notwithstanding all his reputation for liberal ideas, might fall under suspicion of papistical leanings if he continued the intended search? There is something in his remarks about the neglected state of the undercroft *since the Refor-*

mation which favours this view; and so do the "indispositions" of the three learned prebendaries, who were probably of the same way of thinking as himself, and therefore out of sympathy with the Dean.

The sixth and last letter of the series is dated August 16, 1841, and is written from Lord Bolton to a friend at Canterbury. It shows the pertinacity of the Italian Church, but it throws no light on the character of the archbishop of the day. However, it is worth transcribing.

"My dear Sir,—I have lately been applied to from Turin to procure some information respecting the remains of an archbishop of Canterbury named Anselm who lived under the reign of William Rufus, & who was a native of Piedmont. Having heard that you have become an inhabitant of the above named city & that you are connected with the chapter of its cathedral & having moreover often experienced your kind and obliging disposition I venture to trouble you with the request that you will ascertain for me whether the archbishop Anselm was buried in Canterbury Cathedral or any where in the City & whether the place containing his remains is separate & distinguishable in such a manner as to be pointed out or removed."

It seems almost sacrilegious to speak of Canterbury and to say nothing about its glorious cathedral and the other ecclesiastical remains in the famous city. But these are matters about which there are safer guides than myself. I was interested to see just outside the cathedral precincts

a memorial to Christopher Marlowe, the dramatist. No doubt modern ecclesiastical prejudice kept it from being erected in the Cathedral itself; but I feel sure that Archbishop Herring, the friend of Hume and enemy of Anselm, would not have kept the poor freethinking poet out in the cold if he had known of his existence and his connection with Canterbury.

VI

A HOLIDAY IN WENSLEYDALE

A DALE in Yorkshire is a broad valley watered by a river, as Teesdale by the Tees, Nidderdale by the Nidd, Swaledale by the Swale, Wharfedale by the Wharfe; so that Wensleydale should be the dale of the Wensley. But there is no River Wensley. Wensley—that is, Woden's Ley—is, as the word implies, a village, not a river. The river of Wensleydale is the Yore, which gives its name in Norman French disguise to the once famous Cistercian Abbey of Jorevaulx (which is only Yore Vale), just as the Rie gave its name to Rievaulx. The Yore has no reputation among English rivers, because Wensleydale is without poets. Its historians reckon up to its credit a long list of worthies, including a Queen of England, a Prince of Wales, a cardinal archbishop, three common archbishops, five bishops, three chancellors, two chief justices, besides earls, barons, and knights past reckoning; and yet, *caret quia vate sacro*, the River Yore is unhonoured and unsung. Nevertheless it has many mute,

inglorious lovers. Otters love it for the fine trout it breeds. Its own dalesmen love it, and would gladly vindicate its merits on any stricken field against the dalesmen of Nidd or Swale, should they rashly challenge a contest. Painters love it for the bewitching variety of its beauty, its many moods. Old Leland in his "Itinerary" calls it "a ryver of a colour for the most part of soden water, by reason of the colour and the morisch nature of the soile of Wencedale, from whens it cummith." But what is the colour of "soden water"? Sodden or boiled water is of the same colour as fresh, if it is boiled in a clean vessel. Does "soden" mean "pertaining to a sod," and so brown? That interpretation answers the fact, for the Yore is certainly brown of hue, except when in sunshine it reflects the blue of heaven, or in its higher reaches after rain, when it swirls along its narrower channel, a roaring torrent, seething not sodden; or again at Aysgarth, where it spreads over its sheets of limestone in three several "forces," rivalling the cataracts of the historic Nile. The Yore's main tributary is the Cover, which once gave its name to an abbey of white canons at Coverham, and still gives it to the dale which bred the great Reformer, Miles Coverdale, to whose genius is chiefly due the peculiar beauty of our English Bible. As the traveller hangs over the stone bridge at Coverham,

and listens to the flow of the water over its bed of shingle, or as he climbs down one of the ghylls whose musical cascades feed the impetuous stream, the thought occurs whether the beauty of that wonderful rhythm was born of such murmuring sounds heard by the sensitive ear of the Coverdale youth.[1]

The long list of worthies above rehearsed who owe their distinction to being born in Wensleydale emboldens me to ask whether—for all we are an island people—there is not more inspiration for the heroic life to be found in our inland dales than on the sea-board. Which of our national heroes was born and bred in the much-vaunted ozone of a seaside town or village? Even of the famous admirals celebrated by Mr. Henry Newbolt—and an admiral, if anybody, should be ocean-reared—

> "Effingham, Grenville, Raleigh, Drake,
> Benbow, Collingwood, Byron, Blake"—

only the last was cradled within sound of the sea. And if that be so, is it not a little wonderful that

[1] I notice that Drayton, in his spirited geography book in verse called the *Polyolbion*, speaks of the Cover as "a clear rill."

> "Cover, a clear rill,
> Next cometh into Yore, whereas that lusty chace
> For her loved Cover's sake doth lovingly embrace."

"Clear" it is, but in spate it is far from being a rill. The Cover flows into the Yore in Mr. Scrope's park, below Middleham.

fashion should be allowed to override the healthy instinct of the people for inland places and drive them in shoals at this holiday season to the seaside? To see a long line of people sitting disconsolate by the margin of the bitter sea—like Ariadne, but without her excuse—gazing blankly on its blank expanse day after day for a month or six weeks, is to have a vivid illustration of how essentially unintelligent is the practical genius of middle-class Englishmen. They are not happy; their wives are not happy; their children would be as happy anywhere else; nevertheless for the prescribed period they are content to suffer existence in a state of semi-coma, half reading the newspaper and half listening to nigger minstrelsy, while the sun blinds them above and the sea wind makes them sticky, as though they were in training for Yogidom and enfranchisement from the external world. Surely to behave thus is to misconceive the art of holiday-making. If recuperation and the "return to nature" be the fundamental aim of a holiday it is reasonable to seek it in conditions which the modern life of cities tends to make difficult—that is to say, not in noisy torpor, but in rest for the nerves and activity for the limbs. On one of the torrid nights at the end of July, as I sat on the roof of my house in London, thirsting for cool air and stillness, the noises of the

street beat themselves into a sort of rhythm in my head as follows :

I sit on the leads in the heat
And dark, and I fancy I know
The worst of the tortures of Hell :
No silence, all sounds that appal—
The shout of the fool in the street,
The pad of cab horses that go
For ever, the bicycle bell,
The click of the billiard ball.

Nature, speaking through my unpoetical lips, went on to say in a figure (but the rhymes have escaped me), "Make haste and flee from this Babel into the wilderness;" and in gratitude I record my experience that Wensleydale has proved as recuperative to broken nerves as the desert of Horeb to the prophet Elijah. At this moment I am lying with my simple cake (though no prophet), after a morning's quiet saunter through the heather, looking down over the dale where a bend of the river far below shines like a blue sickle among the green pastures; and the occasional stone dwellings, among the farms and woodland climbing up the other side of the valley, have that exquisite tint of grey in the sunlight with which Pugin painted them in Ackermann's illustrated books. To see such simple colour enamelled to brilliancy under a clear sky, and to hear no sound but the cries of quite ordinary sheep made plaintive by distance, is

(for a town-dweller at least) to renew the old Paradise.

I suppose the true test of a successful holiday is whether it has increased the human stock of cheerfulness. The tangled nerves and torpid liver which city life breeds beget in turn that deadly sin which the wise old monks named *acedia*, an indisposition to be pleased or to give pleasure; whereas, on the other hand (we have Wordsworth's authority for the doctrine[1]), cheerfulness accumulated from a leisurely sojourn among the sights and sounds of unsophisticated nature will translate itself on our return to human society into works of beneficence—

> ". . . little nameless, unremembered acts
> Of kindness and of love."

Cheerfulness then being the goal of the holiday-maker, he is the wise man who chooses for the scene of his experiment a place which will yield activity to his interests as well as to his limbs. The careless person, if he has escaped the awful fate of the mere seaside tripper, or that tripper as recently modified into a pilgrim of the golf links, is apt to confuse the pursuit of an interest with mere sight-seeing; whereas a sight, whether

[1] I must point out in passing—for the fact is significant—that the poet formulated this theory from the experience of a holiday of his own, spent not by the seaside, but on the banks of the river Wye. And what is true of the Wye should be true of the Yore and other rivers.

of art or nature, unless it makes some peculiar appeal to us, remains a sight and nothing more. We drive, perhaps, ten miles to see a rock or a heath or a waterfall; "we glance and nod and bustle by," and have gained nothing except the right to say we have seen it. We might more properly, as Dr. Johnson suggested, "sit at home and conceive rocks, heaths, and waterfalls." And the same simple truth holds good of the curiosities of art. Why should we turn aside to see a picture gallery because it is in the neighbourhood we are visiting, if we have no knowledge of painting; or spend half-an-hour inspecting a monastic ruin if we are indifferent to architecture? Let us holiday-makers, to quote the great moralist again, "clear our minds of cant," and go where we go riding our own hobbies.

Wensleydale is fortunate in the variety of the entertainment it affords to man and his hobby. The historian can pore over the traces of the successive invasions—Roman, Saxon, Viking, Norman, Scottish—to which the dale lay only too openly exposed, or read the fortunes of the long strife between king and baron, or king and parliament, in the ruined castles that still frown over the neighbouring hamlet; the ecclesiologer, starting from the only two churches chronicled in Domesday, Spennithorne and Thornton Steward, will trace the gradual unfolding of the Gothic flower under

the peculiar conditions of the place; the lavish flora will appeal to the florist, the fauna to the faunist—Middleham Moor, for example, has a fine breed of race-horses—while the simple child of nature who restricts his interest and his curiosity, like the old gentleman in the Terentian play, to human affairs need not spend an idle moment. My own foible, I confess, is generalisation; but the population being sparse, I cannot pretend to have made any general observations of an important character, unless it were that the inhabitants are well-to-do, and do not seem disposed to let their wealth go out of the clan. I was struck also by the clearness of articulation in all classes. Everybody seemed to have leisure to say all the letters of a word, and said them, with the result that only half the number of ideas was required for an hour's conversation that we need in the south. But then the æsthetic satisfaction was enormously enhanced. I noticed, too, that whereas in the south we speak to each other through a very small slit, as though we were in fear of taking the plague, people in Wensleydale opened their mouths in a full oval. As a consequence most people could sing, and liked doing so. A reflection of a more philosophical character that occurred to me more than once in the dale was that rubbish, even in England where we have so much of it, may be serving a providential purpose, as

well as at Oxyrhynchus. I noticed while inspecting Middleham Castle that the outer shell of sandstone was perfect to a height of about five feet from the ground, was then peeled off, leaving the core of rubble exposed for about ten feet more, and above that was perfect again. The explanation of the mysterious phenomenon was really quite simple. When the castle was dismantled after the Civil War it was first used, by the reverence of the villagers, as a dust-heap; then, at a later time, when the level of the ground had been raised by the accumulation of refuse, as a quarry. In the present enlightened era, when the rubbish has been removed, the lower part of the walls is again exposed, and the castle, though sadly dilapidated, has a more decent appearance, and perhaps stands more securely on its basis than if it had been peeled to the real level of the ground. At Jervaulx Abbey the silent accumulations of nature through a longer period have had the same beneficent effect as the dust and ashes of the Middleham villagers; so that though most of the material structure of the abbey has been gradually removed for building purposes, and carved stones cry out of the walls of neighbouring pigsties, yet by the time the local Vandals had reached the level of the soil a few courses of stone were successfully covered, and now at last being laid bare, have enabled Mr. St. John Hope to make a complete

ground plan of the abbey buildings, so that the curious inquirer has the satisfaction of learning how the old monks lived, and can see for himself that the church was larger than the refectory, a fact which may somewhat surprise him, if his ideas of the monastic life are borrowed from the familiar print of "Bolton Abbey in the Olden Time."

But I must not let myself be drawn into the age-long debate between the "seculars" and the "religious." Each kind of life, no doubt, had its purpose and its merit; but the "religious" became too much at ease in Zion, and their candlestick was removed. It is interesting as one goes from church to church in the dale to notice the spoils that the secular churches secured at the dissolution of their envied brethren, and how three centuries later these beautiful objects have still the air of spoils, looking *déplacés* and uncomfortable. At Aysgarth they have the magnificent rood-screen from Jervaulx; but the rood is gone, not being any longer a Christian emblem, and the screen is not placed between nave and chancel, but on the south side of the choir, where it serves no purpose. In Middleham Church is an incised stone which once covered the tomb of an abbot named Thornton. It is fixed against the tower wall as a curiosity, and no longer covers the poor abbot's bones. But the most striking instance of misused gains is at Wensley. The parclose of a

Scrope chantry at Easby Abbey was brought at the dissolution to a Scrope chantry at Wensley. It is appropriately inscribed with the names and shields of the long and famous line of the Scropes of Bolton. At present it forms three sides of what appears to be an opera-box, with a front painted to look like white marble. As I was not in Wensley on a Sunday I did not see to what purpose this quaint contrivance was put in divine service.

The mention of the name of Scrope—a great name in Wensleydale—recalls the ancient controversy between Sir Richard Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor, ancestor of the ducal family of Westminster, respecting the right to bear the arms *azure, a bend or.* There seems no doubt that the arms had been used in good faith by both families ; they were borne also by the Carminows of Cornwall, with whom both Sir Richard Scrope and the guardian of Sir Robert Grosvenor had disputed them. But a Scrope had not met a Grosvenor in any "chivauchee" until the expedition to Scotland in 1385, when Sir Richard challenged Sir Robert, and the case was sent for trial to the Constable of England. All the great knights and abbots of Yorkshire appeared as witnesses for Scrope, and all the great knights and abbots of Cheshire for Grosvenor ; but there is a significant difference in the concluding ques-

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tion put to one side and the other. The Scrope party, as a rule, say they had never heard tell of Sir Robert Grosvenor or his ancestors till the expedition to Scotland, while the Grosvenor faction content themselves with saying they have nothing to depose about the Scrope claim. Two of the most interesting of the witnesses on the Scrope side were the parson of Wensley Church and the poet Geoffrey Chaucer. As a good specimen of the sort of evidence a church could afford in matters of heraldry, and as a compliment to the memory of the old parson, Sir Simon, whose fine brass is still the most striking beauty of the church, I will transcribe part of his deposition, in the translation of Sir Harris Nicolas.

"Sir Simon, parson of the church of Wynsselowe, of the age of sixty and upwards, said, certainly that the arms Azure, a bend Or, appertained to Sir Richard Scrope, for they were in his church of Wynsselowe in certain glass windows of that church, of which Sir Richard was patron; and on the west gable window of the said church were the entire arms of Sir Richard Scrope in a glass window, the setting up of which arms was beyond the memory of man. The said arms were also in divers other parts of the said church, and in his chancel in a glass window, and in the east gable also were the said arms placed amongst the arms of great lords, such as the King, the

earl of Northumberland, the lord of Neville, the earl of Warren. He also said that there was a tomb in his cemetery of Simon Scrope, as might then be seen by the inscription on the tomb, who was buried in the ancient fashion in a stone chest, with the inscription **Cy gist Simond le Scrope,** without date. And after Simon Scrope lieth one Henry Scrope . . . and after him lieth William son of the said Henry Scrope, who lieth in the manner aforesaid beneath the stone, and there is graven thereon **Ycy gist William le Scrope,** without date, for the bad weather, wind, snow, and rain, had so defaced it, that no man could make out the remainder of the writing, so old and defaced was it. . . . From William came Henry Scrope, knight, who lieth in the Abbey of St. Agatha [*i.e.* at Easby], armed in the arms Azure, a bend Or, which Sir Henry was founder of the said Abbey; and Sir William Scrope, elder brother of Sir Richard that now is, lieth in the same abbey in the same arms depicted, but not painted. The said Sir Simon placed before the Commissioners an albe with flaps [apparels, *paireurs*] upon which were embroidered the arms of the Scropes entire, the making of which arms and the name of the donor were beyond the memory of man. He added that the patronage of his church of Wynsselowe had always been vested in Sir Richard Scrope and

his ancestors bearing the name of Scrope, beyond the memory of man; and that the arms Azure, a bend Or, had always been reputed to belong to him and to his ancestors, and he never heard to the contrary; he had never heard that the arms had been challenged; or of Sir Richard Grosvenor or any of his ancestors."

The amusing thing about this evidence is that most of it is not to the point; the stone coffins, although they testified to the existence of two generations of the family, bore no shields of arms, the first appearance of arms on a tomb being on that of Sir Henry, who died 1336. The glass windows and the alb, the date of which was *outre memoire de hom̄e*, would not necessarily take one further back than the beginning of the fourteenth century—that is, to the same Sir Henry Scrope; who was the first member of the family to be heard of outside his own dale and to acquire wealth. He was a lawyer, a fact with which the Grosvenor party twitted his descendant, and rose to be Chief Justice of the King's Bench, making his fortune out of grants from forfeited estates. Sir Simon politely calls him the founder of St. Agatha's Abbey; but, in fact, he bought that title with other Richmond property.

The evidence of Geffray Chaucere, Esquier, is as characteristic as Sir Simon's. After stating that he had seen Sir Richard Scrope bearing the

contested arms in France before the town of Retters [Retiers], where he himself was taken prisoner, he was asked whether he had ever heard of any challenge made by Sir Robert Grosvenor or his ancestors. To which he replied no, but that he was once in Friday Street, London, and walking through the street he saw a new sign hanging out with these arms thereon, and inquired "what inn that was that had hung out the arms of Scrope," and one answered him, "They are not hung out, sir, for the arms of Scrope, nor painted there for those arms, but they are painted and put there by a knight of the county of Chester called Sir Robert Grovenor;" "and that was the first time that he ever heard speak of Sir Robert Grovenor, or of any one bearing the name of Grovenor."

The trial began on October 20, 1385, and was adjourned from time to time till May 12, 1389, when Thomas Duke of Gloucester, as Constable of England, gave judgment against Grosvenor, ordering him to bear the disputed arms with the difference of a "plain bordure argent." Grosvenor appealed, and Richard II., the following year, affirmed the Constable's decision, all but the assignment of the original coat with a difference which had stuck in the good knight's throat. Grosvenor adopted instead a coat with the same tinctures but a different charge, the *garbe* or wheat-

sheaf, which the family still bear. But the whirligig of time brought its revenge as recently as the year 1880, when the late Duke of Westminster won the Derby with Bend Or, and thereby associated that coat more indissolubly with the house of Grosvenor than if it had been given back to him by the whole Heralds' College on their repentant knees.

One other interesting name besides that of Sir Richard Scrope is closely knit up with the fortunes of Wensleydale, that of Richard Crookback, afterwards King of England. Middleham Castle, the home of Warwick the King-maker, as we know from "The Last of the Barons," passed to Richard by his marriage with the Lady Anne Neville; and here was born his only son and heir; here also he died. Tourists are still asked to imagine the sad scene as taking place in what remains of the round tower at the south-west angle. As there is neither floor nor roof to this interesting chamber, nor, indeed, a chamber at all, the exercise in imagination is severe. But it is the church which remains the best memorial of Richard. The pilgrim to this shrine learns to discard all the notions about the unfortunate monarch that he has gathered from poets in the pay of Lancastrian and Tudor enemies, such as William Shakespeare, whose works are at a discount in Wensleydale. If Horace Walpole had known Middleham he might have added an interesting chapter to his

"Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of Richard III.," for the part of the pious founder which Richard played here, where he was at home and well known, sorts ill with the picture drawn by Shakespeare of a Macchiavelian politician leering between two bishops. As soon as the Duke had acquired the Middleham estate, he obtained from the King, his brother, letters patent creating in the church a college of dean, six chaplains, four clerks, sacristan, and choristers, which bore the name of "the College of the Dean and Chaplains of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, of Middleham, in the County of York," and was made exempt from episcopal visitation. The statutes were drawn and some endowments provided, but the grant of the larger part of these, made just before Bosworth Field, was not ratified by the victor. The stalls in the college bore the names of Our Lady, St. George, St. Catherine, St. Ninian, St. Cuthbert, St. Anthony, and St. Barbara. These particulars may be interesting to the general reader, because such self-governing foundations are to-day unknown in England except in the instances of Westminster Abbey and St. George's, Windsor. The bishops have always turned a cold eye on places exempt from their jurisdiction, and the college at Middleham survived four centuries, only to be degraded in 1856 to the level of common benefices, one of the last canons being no less a

person than Charles Kingsley. The misfortune of Middleham was that, except for Mr. Dean, there was no endowment. But the historical interest should have saved it; and colleges of clergy being so exactly what are wanted for grappling with the irreligion of large populations, it is pitiful that the very idea of such places should be out of mind to-day; for there are ample means to endow them if plutocrats could only be persuaded that it is wiser to spend money on men than on things, even though libraries and organs may last a little longer than the ordinary human being.

From an interesting collection of documents relating to the Collegiate Church of Middleham, made for the Camden Society (1847) by the Rev. William Atthill, Canon and Sub-dean, I quote a reference to an eighteenth-century dean, the Very Rev. Robert Boucher Nickolls, LL.D. (installed 1786), consisting of an entry by him in the parish register:

Burials, October 29*th*, 1792.

I enter under the head of burials as spiritually dead the names of

JOHN SADLER,

Clerk to Mr. John Breare, Attorney-at-law, of this place; and

CHRISTOPHER FELTON,

Clerk to Mr. Luke Yarker, Attorney-at-law, of this place; first, for irreverent behaviour in church a second time,

after public reproof on a former occasion of the same sort; and, secondly, when mildly admonished by me not to repeat the same, they both made use of the most scandalous and insolent words concerning myself, for which I thought proper to pass a public censure upon them after sermon (though they were wilfully absent), in the face of the congregation; and enter the mention of the same in this book, that the names of those insolent young men may go down to posterity as void of all reverence to God and his ministers. Witness my hand,

ROB^{T} B. NICKOLLS, *Dean.*

Witness: ROG^{R} DAWSON, *Reg^{r}.*

Posterity will please take notice.

VII

A MEDITATION AMONG THE TOMBS

I HAVE been wandering of late in a solitude peopled only by ghosts; but the ghosts have been English ghosts of a sanguine complexion and honest humanity, and I have grown to love them; and I would gladly, if I could, put on paper some portion of my enthusiasm, so as to propagate the example of their virtue among their modern representatives. The persons for whom your interest is solicited are the great mediæval merchants, especially the wool-staplers, who lie in forgotten[1] graves beneath the floors of the magnificent churches they erected over the Cotteswold country, which pastured their sheep and turned their fleeces to gold, before the invention of steam machinery took trade away to the coal districts, and Australian wool undersold the English market. The reader will, I trust, allow me to consider that he has made one in that great company who pass through Oxford in the summer on their way to Stratford-

[1] They are forgotten, despite their munificence, by the great *Dictionary of National Biography*.

upon-Avon; and having a day or two to spare, after satisfying his soul with the fascination of that siren among cities, will consent first of all to transfer his person and interest to the line of railway that follows the Thames Valley as far as Fairford. There is much to see on the journey, even from the carriage windows, not the least thought-provoking spectacle being the mad rush north of the siren city herself to embrace Summertown and Wolvercote. (*Quo, musa, tendis? Desine, pervicax!*) But to-day we are to spend with the dead; so having reached Yarnton Junction we turn west and, passing even Lechlade without alighting, push on to the terminus.

The hero of Fairford is one John Tame, who built the present church at the end of the fifteenth century to supersede one hardly a century older, built by the Beauchamps; gold showing itself then as now mightier than blood, or at least less apt to be spilt; for the manor of Fairford came to King Henry after Bosworth Field, and was let by him to the prosperous wool-stapler of Cirencester, which town's name I shall take leave henceforward to write more phonetically Ciceter. "Fairford," says Leland, "never flourished before the coming of the Tames into it." The new esquire, among the many benefactions which marked his acquisition of the manor, determined to rebuild the church in such a way that its

windows, filled with painted glass, might tell the simple Christian worshippers the whole story of their faith; and he accomplished his purpose. In the twenty-eight windows may be seen depicted the chief events of the Gospel history; the twelve prophets who foretold and the twelve apostles who witnessed to it; the four evangelists who wrote down the record and the four Latin fathers who were its chief expounders; and above in the clerestory the great martyrs for the faith confronting the great persecutors. The glass of the windows may disappoint the *virtuosi* who know the jewelled glass of still earlier days; but it is nevertheless exceedingly beautiful, and it has this advantage over the earlier glass, that it admits pictures of the Scripture scenes. The grouping of some of these is remarkable, and the colour is deep and full; at the same time there is enough sky in the background to admit ample light to the church—a consideration that the modern glass-makers too often ignore. It used to be said that the whole churchful of glass was captured on the high seas, and a new church built to fit it. The legend can be traced no further back than the antiquary Dr. Parsons, who was Chancellor of Gloucester after the Restoration. He says: "John Tame, Esq., merchant, was y^e^ first founder of this church, whose son, Sir Edmund Tame, finished the same. He, being a merchant, took

a ship that attaqued, in which was excellent paynted glasse." But experts are now convinced that the glass was designed for the church, and not the church for the glass. Another legend credits the work to no less an artist than Dürer. But again the experts dissent. One of them, the late Rev. J. G. Joyce, who spent much pains upon the history of the windows, decided that the glass was made in England, but by Flemings. Quite recently they have been proved to be the work of a Flemish artist named Aaps.

Before quitting the church let us not omit, especially if we are merchantmen, to pay our vows at the altar tomb of John Tame between the chancel and Lady Chapel. We may cast a respectful glance also at the brass of his worshipful son and heir, Sir Edmund. And finally we must not pass without recognition the monument to Sir William Oldisworth ; since it is to him, according to tradition, that the church and all English people owe it that there are any windows left in Fairford to-day. Bigland, in his "Antiquities of Gloucestershire," says "that during the commotions when the Republican army were on their march to Cirencester, William Oldysworth, esquire, the Impropriator, fearing its destruction, caused the whole to be taken down and concealed." One has to travel no further than Worcester Cathedral, in which "the Republican

army" worshipped for a few days after its kind, with axes and hammers, in order to realise our debt to the public spirit of this gentleman. Some writers think this story of Bigland's incredible, because in 1656 the windows were exhibited to Anthony a Wood by the same Mr. Oldysworth; and the Rev. Mr. Hutton, of St. John's College, Oxford, quotes some verses of that year from Abraham Wright's "Parnassus Biceps" which afford additional evidence that they certainly were up in their frames then:—

> "Fairford, boast!
> Thy church hath kept what all have lost,
> And is preserved from the bane
> Of either war or Puritan."

But this was thirteen years after the march to Ciceter, and the civil war had long been over. Moreover there was no reason to suppose that the Stuarts would ever return; so that if the windows were to be put back at all, we should expect to find them in their places by 1656. The misplacing of two or three of the subjects goes to show that they had been taken out and put in again.

From Fairford we may make the journey, so often made by the Tames, to Ciceter; and as there is no railway, we must make it, as they did, by road. The church at Ciceter is magnificent even for this part of the country, where

the number and excellence of the churches are pointed at by the proverb "As true as God is in Gloucestershire." Like most other parish churches in England, it grew up slowly by additions and restorations, but its present spaciousness tells of the ideas of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Ciceter parish church having been served from time immemorial by the canons of the adjoining abbey, the glory of its successive re-edifyings falls naturally to the various abbots. But the money which these abbots expended with greater or less care and skill came principally from the wallets of the faithful wool-staplers and clothiers. Antiquaries have unearthed in the diocesan registry not a few wills leaving generous bequests for this and that particular service or improvement. In wills of 1402 and 1403 there are bequests towards the building of the tower. John Pratt, in 1513, leaves £40 to "the myddel yle in the Parish Church"; twenty pound was to be paid when the work was begun and the remainder as it proceeded, with a special donation of £6, 13s. 4d. towards the scaffolding; but if a twelvemonth elapsed before the building was taken in hand, then "I wol that a prest singe for me and my friends, having vj *li*, xiij *s*, iiij *d* by yere while the said money lasteth." The work must have been begun at once, because Master Pratt's widow fourteen years later bequeathed her residue to

complete it, as the husband's will gave her permission to do on that condition. Many parishioners leave sums for the glorious south porch, or parvise, still locally known as the "Vice"; among them one Robert Stone bequeaths forty sheep, and John Gerveys adds to his donation of £10 a request to be buried there. Was it humility or the dread of being forgotten that led people thus to desire burial in "some way of common trade"?

But it is the special chantries that not unnaturally attracted the most gifts. A merchant family called Garstang, for example, rebuilt the eastern portion of the south aisle and founded there a chantry for themselves dedicated to St. Edmund Confessor, enclosing it with a beautifully carved screen on which are figured both their shield of arms and their merchant's mark. But in their natural zeal for their own souls' welfare they are not forgetful of the general honour of the church. In 1457 "Harri Garstang honoured the [Lady] chappell with worshipfull vestiments, y^{t} y^{s} to saye, ij wht copeyes and chisypl, ij tuniclys with purtenances on sute." He gave also, what some may think more to the point, a bound Bible, with four silvered markers, and covered with a red and gold cloth. In 1458 Will. Sydney gave £5 for "j egyll," and Agnes Rawe "ij pillows" for the altar; both for the Lady Chapel. Another great

benefactor was Sir W. Nottingham, who rose from a family of weavers to be Chief Baron of the Exchequer. He left money to maintain a priest for the altar of St. Thomas the Martyr, where his parents lay buried, and also to support four poor weavers. All the chantry moneys were diverted, in 1548, to enrich our new Protestant nobility, which was obviously of more benefit to the commonwealth than a parcel of shaveling priests, but the £6, 18s. 8d., the annual share of the four poor weavers, was reserved, and the exact sum is still paid to them, without any regard, it is said, to the present value of the money bequeathed. The elder Nottingham's brass survives with an inscription in contracted Latin: "Orate pro aīabus Willī Notyngham et Cristine uxoris eius &c." I hope that the family which at present enjoys the chantry endowment, having superseded the priest, performs this pious duty. The Gotorests are another family of merchants whose brasses remain: they were vintners and apothecaries, and perhaps earned their name from purveying poppy and mandragora and other "drowsy sirups." A clothman called Robert Ricarde maintained a singing priest who was also to teach four children to sing divine service. Ricarde's peculiar devotion was to St. Anthony; but St. Anthony proved powerless to prevent the fees for teaching the choir boys from finding

their way to lay pockets in that great year of grace 1548. Into lay pockets also went the endowment for an organist. Ricarde had been bailiff, and, having served his year of office, he bequeathed his scarlet and crimson gown to the St. Nicholas chapel "to be bestowed in vestures and ornaments to be used yerely at the feast of the said holy confessour, and at other tymes, to the lawde of God and hym."

Of all the Ciceter merchants, however, the one whose memory I most devoutly cherish is a certain grocer called Hugh Norris. There seems to me a singular charm about his epitaph:

"Reyse, gracious Jhū, to endless lyfe,
At thy grete dome where all schall apere,
Hughe Norys, groc', and Johan hys wyf,
Now dede in grave and beryed here,
Yo' p'yers desyring their soules for chere
The x day of July the yere
Of our Lord God MCCCCXXIX."

This contrasts well, both as poetry and as religion, with the epitaph on the brass of a certain Philip Marner, who died just a century later:

"In Lent by will a sermon he devised
And yerely preacher with a noble [6s. 8d.] prised;
Seven nobles hee did geve y^e^ poore for to defend
And £80 to xvij men did lend,
In Ciseter, Burford, Abingdon & Tetburie,
Ever to be to them a stocke yerely."

And then, again, Norris's will is conceived in a specially patriotic spirit, and has more than a

touch of the wisdom of the serpent. Here is an extract:

"Item, I gyff and bequethe to the reparation of the hygh wayes v li. sterling where the honest men of the town of Circester shall thynk most need about Circester. Item, I gyve to the use of the Parish Churche of Circester a pall of velvett on condycion that the said pall shall be used and occupied at the desire of any man or woman that is or hath been or shall be speciall benefactours to the seid parish and not to be used otherwise nor to no other persons." . . . "Also, if it fortun that any honest men or women be departed, if it please the executors to have the use of the seid pall at their berrying the which hath not geve nayther bequethed nothing unto the welth of the church, I am content if he or she be rych, he or she shall pay for the usying of the seid pall iij s. iiij d., and any other man or woman for the use of the seid pall xx d., and with the seid money geven I ordeyn that yt shall be kep to the maynteyning of the seid pall and vestiments and copes [previously bequeathed] in the vestry to honour God therewith."

That scheme of providing (and lending for a consideration) a special pall for benefactors seems to betoken a shrewd knowledge of human nature; and the idea is worth the attention of modern rectors and churchwardens. Cicetes might put

to this purpose the only one of its many vestments which survived what Dr. Jessopp well calls "the great pillage" of Edward VI.; a beautiful blue cope embroidered with pomegranates and winged cherubim, which has already for some purpose been reduced to a rectangular shape, and is now exhibited in the south aisle.

One would like to know the history of the painted glass, who gave it, and who destroyed it. In a very curious petition presented to Archbishop Laud in 1639 the church is made to say, "I am in comlyness not much inferior to the cathedral church of Bath, but for want of white-lyming of marl look rustily. My windows are parti-coulured, white in one place and red in another, but I was founded with rich coulured glass, such as is in Fayreford church neare me in the same dioces, which is kept decently to this day." Probably the Edwardian Commissioners had taken a dislike to the subjects of certain windows as being legendary (just as a learned Chancellor only the other day objected to a St. Anne teaching the Blessed Virgin), and incontinently poked their sticks through them. In 1642 Prince Rupert used the church as a prison for some of the townsmen, and their friends outside are said to have broken a good many windows to hand food through to them. What remains of the old glass has been collected

into the great west window, where among the saints and doctors are still to be found a few kneeling figures of donors. The glass was arranged here by the antiquary Lysons about 1800, and it is satisfactorily done except for the blue groundwork in which the figures are embedded, which is the purple blue peculiar to that date. The result is that the much greyer blue of the old glass is quite killed. Now that workmen have had greater success in reproducing the old colours, the churchwardens might do a service to the eyes of the congregation at a very small expense by substituting a new framework more in harmony with the tones of the old glass. On the pillars round the nave are carved and painted the shields of benefactors, chiefly of the fifteenth century. Among them are Garstang, and the other merchants, whose brasses survive, and also our old friend Tame of Fairford, or rather his son Sir Edmund, who, being steward of the Abbey, had a house in Ciceter, which displayed, it is said, his new coat of arms in every window. So persistent from age to age are the qualities of human nature.

Leaving Ciceter by the old Roman road we climb up eight or nine miles to what Leland calls "the praty uplandisch toune" of Northleach, now (save reverence) a dead-alive village; but in the centuries we have to-day in mind the chief

market, along with Chipping Campden, of wool and cloth in England, and a town with bailiff, sergeant-at-mace, and other officers of worship,[1] to deride, nickname, mock, or game any of whom was to incur a fine not exceeding sixpence, besides bodily punishment. The church standing on high ground with a magnificent embattled tower is an enduring monument to the greatness that has now altogether deserted the region. The merchant to whom the nave owes its rebuilding in that grandiose fifteenth-century style, which now, bereft of all its colour both in window and on wall, looks somewhat bare and bleak, was a certain John Forty. Wantner says "that the body of the church was built at first very low and dark; and therefore to make it more lightsome and splendid one Mr. Fortey, a wealthy clothier, at his own proper cost and charge, pulled down the roof and raised the walls thereof nearly as high again as it was before, and covered it with lead." John Forty died in 1428, as we learn

[1] There has been preserved a Northleach Court Book stretching from Edward VI. to William and Mary. Some of the entries are quaint enough both in substance and in spelling, *e.g.* :—

22 Oct. 1578. A faut mad bi Nicholas broat of Stow of the hcllde [Stow in the Wold] for bringing of bred to marcat, wyche bred lachet weyte, the peny wytt loufe weyde nomor but nyteene unsis.

26 Sep. 1607. We dyd admyt Symon Walbridge to occupy the mystery of a barber, his fyne xij d.

Ap. 13 1610. John Skilhorne to the science of taylor, his fyne ij s vj d.

7 Sepr. 1638. For faggots to burne the measely pigg o. o. 6.

from the brass that still survives in the church. The south chapel, it is said, was built by another clothman, William Bicknell, to whom may belong one of the brasses which have lost their inscriptions. Was it he who chose the following epitaph on one of these nameless brasses?—

> "Farewell, my Frendes, the Tyde abydeth no Man;
> I am departed from hence and so shall ye;
> but on the Passage the best songe that I can
> is *requiem æternam nobis.* Jhū graunte it me
> When I have ended all myn adversitie,
> Graunte me in Paradise to have a mansion
> That shed Thy blode for my redemption."

The stanza was the fifteenth-century version of "Affliction sore long time he bore," but what a fine commonplace! It may have been Bicknell who built the superb south porch, "a heaven for to see," with its beautiful arcading and its sculptures, still recognisable though defaced, of the Blessed Trinity and the holy Mother and Child. If so, he may well be content that his brass has perished, and say with Horace, "Exegi monumentum *ære* perennius." Of names that are preserved we may note Thomas Forty, Robert Serche, and Thomas Bushe, "merchant of the Staple of Calys," doubtless all in their day bailiffs of the ancient borough, who, having done their duty upon their fellows in open court, have been touched themselves at last upon the shoulder by the mace of that "fell sergeaunt Death," and

stand here patiently upon their woolpacks waiting the last assize. Some of the brasses of these worthies are so excellently designed that they will be found figured in handbooks of the art and treatises upon mediæval dress, and so what names have persisted till to-day are likely to survive as long as most things mundane. It is a pleasure to see how well they are protected by matting from wear and tear and worse. I was a little unhappy at Ciceter to notice that the edges of some were turned, and that those in the chapel now used as a choir vestry were not guarded in any way from *puer vulgaris*, a more edacious monster than Time himself.

From Northleach two roads are open to us, either that overlooking the picturesque villages of Windrush, Great Barrington, and Taynton to Burford, or by Bourton-on-the-Water, Stow-on-the-Wold, and Moreton-in-the-Marsh to Chipping Campden. From either town the pilgrim may continue his journey to Stratford and civilisation. If the pilgrim chance to be a poet, he will recognise that his choice has already been made for him.

"O fair is Bourton, and fair is Moreton
And Stowe on the wide wold,
But fairer far is Burford Town
With its stone roofs grey and old;
And whether the sky be hot and high
Or the rain fall thin and chill,
The grey old town on the lonely down
Is where I would be still.

"O broad and smooth the Avon flows
By Stratford's many piers;
And Shakespeare lies by Avon's side
These thrice a hundred years;
But I would lie where Windrush laves
Fair Burford's lovely hill;—
The grey old town on the lonely down
Is where I would be still."

I am not sure whether I can go so far with the poet as to praise the beauty of Moreton-in-the-Marsh; Bourton-on-the-Water, "that English Venice," is indeed fair, with its grey bridges thrown across the stream; and in his affection for Burford I entirely concur. Nevertheless, I will not take the reader there on this present pilgrimage. We follow the Roman road north through those places with the picturesque names that I above rehearsed. For my ears they have an indescribable music, but all ears are not tuned to the same key. The story is told that a certain Oxford college wanted to let a manor house in this district, and advertised it in the public papers as within two miles of Stow-on-the-Wold, Moreton-in-the-Marsh, and Bourton-on-the-Water, with the result that not a single application for the tenancy was received. Whereupon one of the more worldly wise of the Fellows suggested that the advertisement should be changed to "within two miles of three railway stations," and his wisdom justified itself in the abundance of replies. But

as a fact there is no marsh at Moreton, the water at Bourton is but the upper water of the Windrush, and all this district is from 400 to 800 feet above sea-level, and as salubrious for the hides of men now as it once was for the fells of sheep. Not stopping, however, upon their beauties, but resisting the temptation to do so by taking train where first it becomes possible at Bourton-on-the-Water, we proceed to Chipping Campden, noting as we pass, though Murray will not give us the information, that the merchant prince and benefactor of Stow, comparable to the Tame of Fairford and Forty of Northleach, was a certain Robert Chester, whose son William received a grant of arms in 1467 and became the ancestor of a great Elizabethan lord mayor and founder of the Chesters of Chicheley, who in due time grew into baronets and so forth. The church tower, eighty feet high and a conspicuous landmark, may be seen from the railway. We alight then, at last, at Chipping Campden, or "Campden," as the station board has it, wood being scarce on the Great Western Railway. For the same reason the platform is not built long enough for the normal number of carriages. We are in the rear of the train, and the front part has to emit its passengers before we are drawn up to the station, to find that as rain is falling the small hotel omnibus, when we reach it, is already over-

full. We must therefore either tramp the mile and a quarter, or, as seems best, kick our heels in the waiting-room till the omnibus returns for a second load. Meanwhile we can meditate. How few of all the graceful and decorous nymphs that haunt the slopes of Campden Hill in Kensington rejoicing in its finer ether and the spacious gardens held back yet a little while, though by an ever-lessening lease, from the builder of flats, pay any tribute of respect or even recognition to the obscure little Gloucestershire town that gave their hill its name! It is perhaps only the devout and imaginative male mind that cherishes such pieties. And yet Chipping Campden must have been to its female inhabitants in the fifteenth century pretty much what High Street, Kensington, means to Campden Hill to-day. For Chipping seems to combine in itself the notions both of shopping and of cheap shopping; and if shopping be a joy for ever, cheap shopping, or "cheaping," must have been that joy in its highest intensity.

Campden is one long and lovely street, containing in its course examples of the Cotteswold domestic building of every century from the fourteenth onward, all in the grey stone of the district with stone-slated roofs and mullioned windows. There is a fifteenth-century town-hall with delicately carved buttresses—for Campden was a corporation until a few years since—and

a market-house with ten gables, standing near together like islands in the midst of the broad thoroughfare, much as St. Mary's and St. Clement's stand in the Strand; and where the road bends to the left, as you go down it, there is a fine row of grey and gabled almshouses above the road on a raised terrace, which were founded in 1612 by the builder of the market-house, Sir Baptist Hicks. And so we come to the church, with a tower even nobler than Northleach, and with the same broad spaces within. Perhaps Campden Church is not so successful in some respects as the others we have been visiting, for its arches are more flattened, and one sees whence came the suggestion of the "Gothick" arches at Strawberry Hill. The late Perpendicular style, even more than its predecessors, needs a master to reconcile us to it; such as was Sir Reginald Bray, the courtly architect of King's College Chapel at Cambridge, and Henry VII.'s Chapel at Westminster, and St. George's Chapel at Windsor, to name only his masterpieces.

What are the names of the fifteenth-century woolmen that Campden delighted to honour because they honoured Campden? As their brasses record them they are: William Grevel, who died in 1401; William Welley, 1450; John Lethenard, 1467; and William Gybbys, 1484. Grevel is said to have inhabited the beautiful house with

the oriel window that certainly dates from his time. He left 100 marks to the new work in the Church of the Blessed Mary of Campedene, where he desired to be buried, and the eastern part of the church may be of this date. He is described on his brass as "flos mercatorum lanaru' tocius [*i.e.* totius] Anglie"—the flower of the woolmen of England—a noble praise. Of Grevel's ancestry we know nothing except the name of his father; there are records of Grivels of Campden, burgesses of the thirteenth century, from whom in all probability he descended. His posterity is more famous. In the seventeenth century Fulke Greville, who described himself on his monument as the friend of Sir Philip Sidney, obtained from King James I. a grant of Warwick Castle, which he raised from its ruins and founded the present house of Warwick.

A second great house descended from one of these Campden benefactors is that of the Earls of Gainsborough, whose second title is Viscount Campden. The founder of the family was the Baptist Hicks already referred to, who was the son of a London silk mercer of Gloucestershire extraction, who bought the manor in 1609 from a certain Anthony Smyth. Anthony was the son of Thomas Smyth, of whom nothing much is known except that he gathered wealth and set his heart on reuniting all the properties that had been

comprised in the old manor of Campden, finally succeeding in his object. He obtained his grant of arms in 1540—three fleurs-de-lis between golden crosses—perhaps because he had by that time made all the gold he wished, and had leisure to consider the lilies "which toil not neither do they spin." He lies in a canopied tomb on the north side of the altar, arrayed in full armour. His epitaph describes him as "a pueritia sua aulicus"—a courtier from boyhood, whatever that means. Baptist Hicks dealt not only in silk, but in money. His elder brother Michael, a distinguished financier from whom the present Lord St. Aldwyn is descended, was Secretary to Lord Burghley, and from a letter to the brother we learn that King James at one time owed Baptist £16,000. James, it would appear, cleared some of the debt by a knighthood, more by a baronetcy, and Charles redeemed the residue by the Campden peerage. But Lord Campden, if he lent money to the King, made a more munificent and more local use of other moieties of his fortune. He re-roofed the chancel of Campden Church. He founded almshouses for twelve poor people, and endowed them with three shillings and fourpence a week each, together with a hat and gown and a ton of coals yearly. He also built the beautiful Market House. The house that he built for himself at a cost, it is said, of £30,000, "one of the

neatest in England," as Fuller describes it, was burnt for him by a good-natured friend, Sir Henry Bard, who held Campden for the King, to prevent it falling into the hands of the rebels. The house he built in Kensington was better fated. He lies in the south aisle of Campden Church, side by side with his wife, carved in "monumental alabaster" on one of those huge tombs like a four-post bedstead in which the Jacobean nobility delighted. In the same chapel are interred his daughter and heiress Juliana, with her husband Sir Edward Noel, the second Viscount. A local guide-book, a little unkindly, describes their effigies as "standing in a cupboard enveloped in shrouds." What the sculptor designed was to represent the scene at the Resurrection. Sir Edward holds his wife's hand, and is handing her out of the tomb in the politest manner possible. All the epitaphs are excellent specimens of the Jacobean style, florid and stately, and yet with touches of intimacy that the next century with its balanced periods failed to recapture.

Of another very important direction in which these ancient merchantmen exercised their benevolence I have said nothing in this letter, but it must not be overlooked. They were devout believers in the advantages of education. In all these Cotteswold towns you find grammar schools of an old foundation which owe nothing, some-

times not even thanks, to the young and pious little Tudor who has so curiously come to be regarded as the author and patron saint of English letters. The Grammar School at Northleach was founded by William Dutton, whose descendants hold the barony of Sherborne; that at Chipping Campden by John Varby or Fereby. From Northleach (where the school is for the moment in abeyance) and from Campden there is still a scholarship to Pembroke College, Oxford.

The moral of this meditation I should like to address, with all respect, to the London merchants. Their fellows in the North are in several ways worthy successors of the fifteenth-century woolmen; they have endowed professorships in their local universities, calling the chairs after their own names; they have endowed bishoprics: in Liverpool they are building a cathedral; but London is the grave of the local public spirit. There is more need for churches in London than ever, and more need for priests; but the churches are not built, and the London priests are expected to train themselves for the ministry, live on air, and preach eloquent sermons. If Masters Tame, and Forty, and Grevil, and Hicks were to come to life and walk up the Strand, and see at the very gates of the City by St. Mary's Church a King's College where clerks are trained for the priesthood, they would at once ask who were

the merchants that endowed the teachers' chairs, and what was the amount of the bursaries for the poor students; and when they got their answer they would post back in disgust to their own centuries.

ATTERBURY

ATTERBURY

FRANCIS ATTERBURY was born on March 6, 1663, in the full tide of loyalty that followed the Glorious Restauration, at the village of Milton, in Bucks, of which his father was rector. The Atterburys were a Northamptonshire stock, which had for several generations contributed to the ranks of the clergy, and it was natural that the two sons of the rector of Milton, Lewis and Francis, should expect in due course to take Holy Orders, as they both did. With Lewis Atterbury we shall not be concerned directly; but he comes twice into his brother's history in so interesting a manner that it is worth while turning out of our course, even at the start, to say what has to be said about him. While his brother was Bishop of Rochester the archdeaconry of that diocese fell vacant, and Lewis Atterbury, then Rector of Hornsey, made solicitation for the post. Indeed, in order to lose no time, he asked for it a month before it was vacant. The bishop, who knew that his elder brother would make an insubordinate junior, demurred. "I protest to you," he writes, "I cannot help thinking it the

most unseemly thing in the world, and I am very sure the generality of those whose opinions I regard will be of that opinion." . . . "It had been a much properer post for my nephew [*i.e.* his brother's son]—if God had pleased to spare his life." But Lewis Atterbury did not agree that his being older than the bishop was a disqualification for serving under him. He replies:

"I have since considered all that you said to me yesterday; and both from reason and matter of fact still am of opinion that there can be no just matter of exception taken. I shall only lay down two or three instances which lie uppermost in my thoughts. Your lordship very well knows that Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, had a brother for his archdeacon; and that Sir Thomas More's father was a puisne judge when he was Lord Chancellor. And thus, in the sacred history, did God himself appoint that the safety and advancement of the patriarchs should be procured by their younger brother."

The bishop, however, was not convinced by these precedents, and gave the office to Dr. Her Brydges, brother of the Duke of Chandos. T final letter of the would-be archdeacon is wo reading in full.

"I am obliged to you for the favour of your last, ar more particularly for giving me a reason for your dispos of the archdeaconry and prebend annexed, when you w not obliged to give any reason at all. I cannot yet imagi what indecency there can be to have raised your eld

brother in place under you, which doth not bear more hard supposing the person to be the brother of a Duke. There is some show of reason, I think, for the *non-acceptance*, but none for the not giving it. And since your lordship was pleased to signify to me that I should over-rule you in this matter [that was in the first letter], I confess it was some disappointment to me; though since you did not think fit to bestow it on me, I think you have given it to one of the most deserving persons I know of, who will add more to the honour of the place than I could have received from it. I hope I shall be content with that meaner post in which I am; my time at longest being but short in the world [he was sixty-four and lived eleven years longer], and my health not suffering me to make those necessary applications others do. I did not think that Dr. Brydges would have taken up with an archdeaconry, when his brother can make him a Bishop when he pleases."

The other matter in which the brothers clashed was a temporal one. The father by will had divided his landed property between the two sons, and given Francis a contingent interest in the whole, should Lewis die without issue. Lewis thereupon tried to set the will aside on some informality, and failing to do so, bequeathed by his own will to a third person the property already entailed on his brother. So much for Lewis Atterbury; these two slight glimpses of whom are enough to convince one that there was character in the family.

When Francis was of fit age he was sent to what, at that epoch, was the first school in England, the foundation that flourished in the Westminster

cloisters under the rod of the renowned Richard Busby, then in his prime. From Westminster he passed in May 1681 to Christ Church, and found himself in congenial society. The Dean of Christ Church at the time was Dr. Fell of dubious memory; but among the canons and soon to be dean was the celebrated Henry Aldrich, eminent for his genius alike in logic, architecture, and music. The society of the House at that period was spoken of commonly as "the Christ Church wits," on account of their general turn for epigram. But while cultivating the sprightlier muses over their port and tobacco, a few of them did not altogether neglect more serious studies; and Atterbury, on being appointed censor in 1698, determined to set the House in order. In a letter from his friend Smalridge, who had followed him from Westminster, we have this sentence: "You are resolved to bestir yourself, you say, in you[r] office in the House; foresee some trouble and i[t] will, and are yet resolved for the good of t[he] House. A hero! I suppose you expect to [do] little good but upon the Westminsters. No gruf[f]ness, I beseech you; use them civilly, and stick t[o] your point." The passage is worth notice, becaus[e] it shows thus early the stuff of which Atterbur[y] was made. He was by temperament a reformer a man of strong principles and earnest zeal; an[d] a little disposed to carry through his reform

without much thought for the human feelings of the objects of his reformation. There is some evidence that the experience Christ Church had of his censorship made the college a little reluctant to welcome him afterwards as dean; and there is a sentence attributed to his friend Smalridge, who wrote this warning letter, and who oddly enough succeeded him in the deaneries of Carlisle and Christ Church, which shows that the warning had not much effect on his dictatorial temper: "Atterbury goes before and sets everything on fire, and I come after him with a bucket of water."

In the year of his censorship Atterbury became tutor to a gentleman, who some years later made a figure in the world of scholarship, the Hon. Charles Boyle, son of the Earl of Orrery. "Mr. Boyle," he writes to his father, "takes up half my time, and I grudge it him not, for he is a fine gentleman, and while I am with him I will do what I can to make him a man." Atterbury did what he could also to make Mr. Boyle a scholar. It was the excellent custom of the Deans of Christ Church to keep the younger graduates at their desks by setting them to edit a classical text; and it so happened, when Mr. Boyle was ready for this exercise, that Sir William Temple, the diplomatist, in a literary essay (1692) had praised the Epistles of Phalaris (which, it is said, he had not Greek enough to read) as having "more race,

more spirit, and more force of wit and genius, than any others I have ever seen either ancient or modern." Accordingly, Mr. Boyle was set to edit these racy epistles. What followed is well known, but not perhaps the share in it that belonged to Atterbury. Boyle had applied to Bentley, who was King's librarian, through a bookseller, for the loan of a manuscript, and by some misunderstanding it was not lent him long enough for complete collation. Boyle thereupon in his preface spoke of Bentley as having refused its sufficient use *pro singulari sua humanitate.* Bentley, seeing the complaint, explained and apologised, but Boyle did not withdraw the offensive expression. So Bentley took the opportunity of a friend's book to add a dissertation, proving the letters to be spurious. This was resented by the Christ Church dons as a public affront, and they put their heads together to concoct a reply to Bentley's dissertation, to which that scholar made rejoinder by expanding his treatise with notes. The Christ Church examination bears the name of the Hon. Charles Boyle, but his share in it becomes plain from the following letter addressed to him by Atterbury:

"Sir! You might have sent these papers to anybody better than me, whose opinion all along in the controversy you have not seemed very willing to take, and whose pains in it, I find, have not pleased you. In laying the design

of the book, in writing above half of it, in reviewing a great part of the rest, in transcribing the whole, and attending the press, half a year of my life went away. What I promised myself from hence was that some service would be done to your reputation, and that you would think so. In the first of these I was not mistaken; in the latter I am."

One feels that in those days there was some advantage in being a person of quality, if you were allowed to put your name to works of learning which your tutors composed. It was this Boyle controversy, as it is called, which first made Atterbury known in London; for the fashionable world of the day was interested in it. It formed an incident in the literary debate between Ancient and Modern learning, which Temple's essay had set going, and Temple's secretary, Dr. Swift, had continued in his "Battle of the Books." And we must recollect that, though everybody now knows that Bentley was right, at the time the current opinion went with Boyle. Garth, for example, in his "Dispensary," writes:

> "So diamonds take a lustre from their foil,
> And to a Bentley 'tis we owe a Boyle;"

and Swift, in the "Battle of the Books," represents Boyle as advancing against his trembling foe, clad in a suit of armour given him by all the Gods, *i.e.*, the Christ Church wits, as the representative of "the two noblest of things, sweetness and light."

The Boyle controversy, then, first brought Atterbury into notice; but it was a theological controversy that first showed his capabilities and temper as a Churchman. The centre of the Romanising party in Oxford at this time was the Master of University College, Obadiah Walker, who kept a private printing-press from which he issued many books and pamphlets, for the most part written by an old tutor of the College, Abraham Woodhead. One of these was called "Considerations on the Spirit of Martin Luther." This Atterbury replied to with a great deal of sense, and in a style the secret of which perished with the eighteenth century. I must give one sentence:

"When I first happened upon this pamphlet, and by some peculiar beauties in the style easily discovered its owner, I was, I must confess, not a little surprised. I could not have imagined that a man of so big a reputation as the author of 'The Guide to Controversy'—one whose thoughts had for some years conversed with nothing less than œcumenical councils, popes, and patriarchs—should quit all these fine amusements for the humble task of life-writing and drawing of characters. It was mean prey, I thought, for a bird of his pounces, and the design he did it with made it ten times more a riddle. The doctrines of the Reformation have, for near two centuries, kept the field against all encounters; and does he think they may be foiled at last by two or three little remarks upon the life and actions of a single Reformer? But it looks like a jest when the irregularities committed by Luther in

Germany are turned upon us here in England, as if anything that he said or did could affect a Church established upon its own bottom, and as independent of any foreign authorities as the crown her defender wears."

In the year 1687, in which he first engaged in controversy, Atterbury took Holy Orders, married, and soon left Oxford. His wife was a Miss Katherine Osborn, who brought him £7000, and presently a son, Osborn (who figures in the later correspondence as the ne'er-do-weel Obby); a daughter also, who was to become celebrated for her devotion to her father in exile, and who, on her last visit to him, expired in his arms; a circumstance on which Pope wrote some familiar lines.

On coming to London, Atterbury was made lecturer at St. Bride's, in Fleet Street, and presently appointed Chaplain-in-Ordinary to the King and Queen. At the same time he was elected preacher at the hospitals of Bridewell and Bethlem; it being the policy of our forefathers to correct vicious women and tame lunatics by the gentle influence of sermons. It was not, however, Atterbury's sermons that first made him a great figure in the Church, although we have Steele's testimony in the *Tatler* to their excellence, and the testimony of Hoadly's replies to their controversial importance: it was the question of the revival of Convocation. It is possible that

I may have readers who do not know that Convocation was for eleven centuries a legislative body, meeting concurrently with the lay parliament; that, after the Restoration, it surrendered its powers of separate taxation of the clergy; and after the Revolution, when most of the bishops were Whig, and most of the clergy Tory, even deliberation was considered dangerous, and it was prorogued as soon as summoned from 1690 to 1701. It was not to be expected that the High Church party would carry passive non-resistance to such a practical length as to allow themselves to be extinguished in the interests of the State without a protest. In 1696 there appeared anonymously a "Letter to a Convocation-man," asserting the right to meet, and attributing the immorality of the day to the want of a Convocation. This was answered by Dr. Wake, afterwards archbishop, and Atterbury replied to him in a book entitled "Rights and Privileges of an English Convocation Stated and Vindicated." As a result of the stir, Convocation was allowed to meet in 1701, and the privilege was continued for sixteen years; but so much of its energy was spent in wranglings between the two Houses on constitutional points, that we cannot be surprised that after the death of good Queen Anne, and the establishment of the Hanoverian *régime*, Sir Robert Walpole once more took the short and

easy way to quiet controversy; and Convocation did not meet from 1717 to 1850.

Atterbury's acknowledged services to his party, and some unacknowledged (such as was later the composition of Sacheverell's defence), were rewarded by preferment; at first to the archdeaconry of Totnes, and a canonry at Exeter, given him by his lifelong friend the Bishop of Exeter, Sir Jonathan Trelawny; and three years later to the deanery of Carlisle. The party disputes of the time are vividly brought before us in the refusal of the Bishop of Carlisle—with whom, as Archdeacon of Carlisle, Atterbury had been in controversy about Convocation—to institute him to the deanery until he signed some propositions asserting the royal supremacy. Atterbury very cogently replied that the surest mark of his regard for the Queen's supremacy would be "humbly (as I now do) to desire your lordship that you would, in virtue of her Majesty's letters patent, grant me institution to the deanery of Carlisle without delay," as in the event the bishop was compelled to do. Seven years later (1711) Atterbury became Dean of Christ Church, and in 1713 Dean of Westminster and Bishop of Rochester; the two posts being held together because of the small income attaching to the bishopric.

In regard to Atterbury's behaviour in his

several deaneries, many persons will recall the judgment of Macaulay in his brilliant sketch; which, if it does not actually refuse the Tory Churchman any virtues, certainly puts them all into parentheses.

"It was not in his nature to be a mild or equitable governor. He left the chapter of Carlisle distracted by quarrels. He found Christ Church at peace, but in three months his despotic and contentious temper did at Christ Church what it had done at Carlisle. He was succeeded in both deaneries by the humane and accomplished Smalridge, who gently complained of the state in which both had been left. . . . It was said by Atterbury's enemies that he was made a bishop because he was so bad a dean. Under his administration Christ Church was in confusion, scandalous altercations took place, opprobrious words were exchanged, and there was reason to fear that the great Tory college would be ruined by the tyranny of the great Tory doctor."

Well, there are two sides to most questions, and we must remember that Macaulay, as a good Whig, took care that the Tory dogs should not have the best of it. It happens that we have a letter from Atterbury in reply to one from Swift, asking for advice on the management of a chapter, when he was made Dean of St. Patrick's, which puts the matter very plainly from the decanal point of view ("Correspondence," ii. 17). But as this is too long to quote, a sentence from the Duke of Wharton's eulogy on Atterbury—

written after his disgrace — may perhaps be accepted as coming near the truth:

"He was always for maintaining the dignity and privileges of the several offices he bore in the Church; and this just way of behaviour, enforced by that steadiness which was natural to him, created him many enemies among the canons of Christ Church and prebendaries of Westminster, who naturally must, by their own interest, be obliged to oppose any dean who should maintain the undoubted rights which he ought to enjoy."

But to come to details—Atterbury's tenure of the Deanery of Carlisle is memorable in the constitutional history of the Church, because it revealed the unsatisfactory condition in which the legislation under Mary Tudor had left Henry VIII.'s new cathedral foundations. Atterbury discovered that the Dean of Carlisle had more power under the charter than he had under the statutes. Accordingly he disallowed the statutes, on the ground that they lacked the authority of Queen and Parliament. The facts are shortly these: Under Queen Mary an Act was passed declaring the cathedral statutes of Henry without force, for a technical reason, and giving the Queen power for her life to make others under the Great Seal. She did so at Durham, but nowhere else; and Durham is still governed by the Marian Statutes. The same power was given to Elizabeth who did nothing at all. Charles I. gave statute

Canterbury, Norwich, and Winchester; Charles II. to Ely and Worcester, but without authority of Parliament; so that their legality was highly doubtful. Hence Atterbury had an excellent case in law. The occasion of his pleading his prerogative was not perhaps the one he would have chosen; but it was the first that presented itself —a month after his installation. Two of the minor canons "having misbehaved themselves in the vestry by kicking, boxing, and by words abusing one another," were suspended and made to apologise (November 1704), and in the following April were restored to their office by the vice-dean and chapter. (The dean had obtained from his patron, Harley, the Lord Treasurer, a dispensation from residence.) At once Atterbury protested "on the account of the right conferred on me as Dean by the Foundation Charter of our Church, to take cognisance of, and punish, all such offences and disorders." There were other cases of an equally trivial nature, one about the appointment of a butler. "Your pretending to name a Butler," writes the dean, "in direct opposition to the powers granted me by the Foundation Charter, is, indeed, a notable step." Moreover, he claimed the right of vetoing presentations to livings made by the vice-dean and chapter in his absence, although that express power was given them by the statutes. In all

these assertions of the decanal prerogative, Atterbury was supported by a certain Dr. Todd, who was looking for the reversion of his stall. The other canons appealed to the bishop to visit, and he visited. Atterbury resisted the Visitation, "based," as he said, "on pretended local statutes," as being derogatory to her Majesty's authority, as the only legal visitor of a Royal Foundation—a fine repartee to the particular bishop who had charged him at his installation with disloyalty. The Visitation was held, and Dr. Todd suspended and excommunicated. Meanwhile the archbishop saw that something must be done to secure the authority of the statutes of new foundation cathedrals, which were all thus impugned, and what was done was to pass an Act (6 Anne) which laid down: "that in all cathedrals and collegiate churches, founded by the said King Henry VIII., such statutes as have been usually received and practised . . . since the late happy Restoration of Charles II., and to the observance whereof the Deans and Prebendaries have used to be sworn at their installations, shall be good and valid in law."

To come now to Christ Church. There are by chance preserved among the Portland MSS. at Welbeck (edited for the Historical Manuscripts Commission),[1] a series of letters from a Dr. Strat-

[1] Vol. vii.

ford, one of the canons of Christ Church, to Edward Harley, son of Queen Anne's Lord Treasurer—a letter every two or three days—and we have therefore an almost painful insight into the feelings of the chapter towards their dean. It is interesting to turn from these letters, full of what in a layman would be called spite, to those of Atterbury, written during the same period, which contain only one sentence, and that a short businesslike one, which gives so much as a hint that there were domestic differences. Of course the reason is not far to seek. Atterbury had no personal quarrel with the canons; all he wanted was his own way, because his own way seemed to him the best way; generally he took it without raising the question of his right to take it; if he was opposed on the plea of constitutional custom, he examined the custom, and usually found good reason for disregarding it. To do him justice, we have to remember that his schemes were generally large schemes; and he disliked being thwarted in them by such irrelevant considerations as the feelings of Dr. A. or Dr. B., or even the precedents of his predecessors. At Christ Church the two most debated questions were the dean's claim to present to all the college livings; and his dismissal of the chapter clerk, who was old, and inclined to stand on all the old ways. The latter question was fought in a

highly constitutional manner, the canons refusing to attend chapter with the new clerk, and the dean refusing to attend with the old one; and as at the height of this crisis there was £1000 in fines to be divided, victory would probably have lain with the longest purse, had not Atterbury been removed to Westminster. One passage may be quoted from Dr. Stratford—a description of a private interview between him and the dean—which (as it seems to me) shows us very clearly the character of both.

"*November* 15, 1711.—Our governor and I met last night in my little parlour *tête-à-tête* at his own desire; he sat from seven till nine; he returned after prayers and sat till twelve. He began with Gore's fine, and grew very warm; I was prepared and rebuked him very seriously for his passion, and took the liberty to tell him how little I thought it became him, whether it were affected or real. To be short, I got the better of him, and he agrees to let it go as we would have it. We then went on the general business of the College. I gave him in every point the fullest information I could, and made my reflections with decency to him, but freedom enough as to my own opinion. He took occasion in his discourse to drop graciously that when he was most angry with me he took me for an honest man. At twelve the Judas threw his arm about my neck and kissed me, and desired we

might have no more squabbles, for he hated them. I asked him if he could say that with a good conscience; he smiled at that. He has been looking into our muniments, and finds he has not so uncontrollable a power as he took himself to have."

If relations grew more strained between Dr. Stratford and his dean as the months went on, it is perhaps sufficient explanation that these chronicle letters were being sent every few days to the son of the dean's patron, and that the dean got to know of it.

"*December* 2, 1712.—I hear from my brother Smalridge that he has been allowed to have an hour or two of your time. We are all sensible of your lordship's concern for us, and I for the particular share I have in it. But our evils require a speedier remedy than that which your lordship thinks we should wait for, nor are we so wicked as to wish ourselves eased of that which is evil to us by that which must be greater to the public. God forbid that a son of perjuries should under this ministry be preferred to the mitre! Promotion surely is very improper for one to whom a pillory would be an unjustifiable mercy."

When the Deanery of Westminster fell vacant a few months later, it was Dr. Stratford who took the Queen's offer of it to the aged Dr. South, and, on his declining the post, it was conferred on

Atterbury. Over poor Dr. Stratford's rage it is best to draw a veil.

At Westminster we cannot trace Atterbury from day to day in the private correspondence of any of the prebendaries; so that happily it must suffice to refer to the great works of building with which his name is imperishably connected. He opened his tenure of the Deanery by demanding, as principal commissioner for the repairs of the Abbey church under the terms of the Parliamentary grant, an account from Sir Christopher Wren of what had been done and what remained to do. Roughly the report was that the south side had been put in order, and the north side was still untouched; and it is the north side of the church that we associate with Atterbury, especially the north porch and the rose window. The window seems to have been completed just before the end of Atterbury's reign, for there is a tradition that at the close of his trial he wished to pass through the Abbey to look at it, and was refused leave. Perhaps its present condition, in which it seems to be emerging piecemeal from an undeserved obscuration, may be taken as significant of its builder's fame.[1]

Another important piece of Atterbury's building was the school dormitory in the college garden. A thousand pounds had been be-

[1] Mr. Pearson, after reducing the rose window, covered it with brown varnish.

queathed in 1710 by an old Westminster, Sir Edward Hannes, one of the Queen's physicians, for a new dormitory to be designed by Wren, who drew a plan; but that great architect declaring the sum insufficient, Dean Sprat and the chapter obtained a decree from Chancery empowering them to use the money to repair the old dormitory in Dean's Yard. This was April 26, 1713. On June 10 Atterbury was installed, and at once induced the chapter to reverse their decision; a plan was approved, based on Wren's, and a site provisionally fixed upon in the college garden. And there the matter seems to have rested for five years, while the legacy accumulated interest, and Atterbury turned his attention to the repairs of the Abbey church and his own house. At last, on December 8, 1718, the dean and chapter sent a unanimous memorial to the king, begging for a donation and the royal patronage; but three weeks later appear the first official signs of difference of opinion among the prebendaries, a decision as to the site being carried by six votes to three. The next step was for the dissentients, who were supported by Dr. Freind, the headmaster of the school, to take the case into Chancery on the plea that the new building would deface their garden, "and require the same to be put into a new modell; and two rows of lime trees, which stand on each side one of the

walks of the said garden, must be cutt or dugg up," not to speak of the annoyance to the adjacent houses. The Lord Chancellor ordered a trial at King's Bench on the point of annoyance, and on that of the interest of particular prebendaries in the common garden, but Atterbury managed to get the House of Lords to reverse the Chancellor's ruling, and the question was referred back to the chapter for a formal statement of individual opinions. Six were for the garden site and six against it, and as Atterbury gave the casting vote in favour of the new building, the House of Lords gave its decree accordingly. The present generation of Westminster scholars have reason to be thankful to the fighting dean for carrying his point against the selfishness of individuals, including the headmaster of the school.

I need not go into the less important domestic differences between dean and prebendaries of which we catch glimpses beneath the formal records of the chapter books, all of which seem to have been communicated to Dr. Stratford at Christ Church, and by him to Harley. If Atterbury guarded his own prerogatives against the prebendaries, he was no less jealous of the privileges of the chapter as against the outside world. He had disputes, for example, with the churchwardens of St. Margaret's about the appointment of a parish clerk and a sexton, in

both of which he was worsted.[1] He seems to have been a good dean in many respects, caring for the dignity of the Abbey services as well as for the fabric. We hear that when, as Bishop of Rochester, he consecrated Greenwich Church, he took the Abbey choir to sing anthems, which implies that it had a good reputation under the care of Dr. Croft. To his good taste the chapter owe the finest silver plate in their possession. Against all this we have to set one grave dereliction of duty, in his want of care for the Abbey muniments. Addison tells us with what zeal he studied them. But it was during his deanship that so many passed into the possession of his patron Harley, and are now in the Harleian collections at the British Museum ; while others still, it is believed, remain at Welbeck which came to Edward Harley through his marriage with Lady Henrietta Cavendish Holles, and passed by their daughter's marriage to the second Duke of Portland. Whether the dean gave Harley in so many words *carte blanche* to take what he chose, no one now can say ; but he must have allowed him to borrow without security.

[1] The rector of St. Margaret's tells me that the general practice had been for the dean to recommend individuals for election by the vestry to the various parochial offices, whereupon the vestry would elect without hesitation. But when Atterbury strained what had been an act of courtesy into a legal right, the vestry resisted and won their suit at law.

Now let us turn to what Pope spoke of as "Atterbury's softer hour." He was a friend, and a good friend, to most of the famous wits of the reign of Queen Anne—Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, Gay, Prior; even Addison, who was as strong a Whig and Low Churchman as Atterbury was a High Churchman and Tory. To begin with, he was himself something (not much, perhaps, but something) of a poet, of the school of Waller. His best lines in this manner are those upon a "white fan" borrowed from Miss Osborn, afterwards his wife:

> "Flavia the least and slightest toy
> Can with resistless art employ:
> This fan in meaner hands would prove
> An engine of small force in love;
> Yet she, with graceful air and mien,
> Not to be told, or safely seen,
> Directs its wanton motions so
> That it wounds more than Cupid's bow;
> Gives coolness to the matchless dame,
> To every other breast—a flame."

But if not a great poet, Atterbury was no small critic. His preface to the 1690 edition of Waller is a very fine piece of work; and there is in the chapter library at Westminster a copy of another edition of that poet in which his critic has written many animadversions and not a few emendations —a bold undertaking, of which an account will be found in a succeeding paper. Still more to his

credit is it that he admired Milton before Addison set the fashion of doing so.

The first reference we have to Swift in Atterbury's correspondence occurs in a letter to Bishop Trelawny (June 15, 1704).

"I beg your lordship (if the book is come down to Exon.) to read 'The Tale of a Tub'; for bating the profaneness of it, it is a book to be valued, being an original of its kind, full of wit, humour, good sense, and learning. . . . The town is wonderfully pleased with it."

A fortnight later he writes:

"The authors of a 'Tale of a Tub' are now supposed generally at Oxford to be one Smith and one Philips, the first a student, the second a Commoner of Christ Church."

But three days after he seems to have got wind of the real author, for he writes:

"The author of a 'Tale of a Tub' will not as yet be known; and if it be the man I guess, he hath reason to conceal himself because of the profane strokes in that piece, which would do his reputation and interest in the world more harm than the wit can do him good."

Swift was in England for a while the next year, when he made the acquaintance of Addison and other men of letters, and he returned in 1706 for a long period. But it is not till the "Journal to Stella" begins in September 1710 that we can trace his relations with Atterbury. In April 1711 he took lodgings in Chelsea, in a house opposite

Atterbury's, to have the benefit of a walk to London, and for the next two years they s much of each other.[1]

Prior was another of the wits with whom A bury was on intimate terms. They had beer Westminster together; and one or two le survive which show the awkwardness of a bish having literary friends. I remember a ma letters once describing to me the awful cl that came over Archbishop Benson's face w once passed from general conversation to s some preferment for a clergyman in whon interested. It is gratifying to find that when such solicitations were everyda Atterbury behaved as we could have w to behave. Prior's letter and Atterbu are printed in the latter's correspondenc Prior rejoins with good humour; but he d seem to have forgiven the repulse, or other reasons for dissatisfaction (of w know nothing), for they quarrelled. A from a letter of Atterbury to Pope speaks Prior after his death:

"*September* 27, 1721.—I had not strength en attend Mr. Prior to his grave, else I would have to have shewn his friends that I had forgotten and

[1] A portrait of Atterbury, recently sold in Dublin, is n Deanery at Westminster. It may very well have been a Swift.

what he wrote on me. He is buried, as he desired, at the of Spenser: and I will take care to make good in respect what I said to him when living, particularly the triplet he wrote for his own epitaph, which while ere on good terms I promised him should never ar on his tomb, while I was Dean of Westminster."

The verses, accordingly, do not appear on the b:[1] which, it may be remembered, is more twice the size of Spenser's, but a very me tomb with one of the few good busts Abbey. What Prior had written on y certainly required some forgiveness. e two epigrams: the first was by way , and runs as follows:

Francis lies here, friend; without stop or stay
value your peace, make the best of your way.
h at present arrested by Death's caitiff paw,
stirs he may still have recourse to the law.
in the King's Bench should a verdict be found
t by livery and seisin his grave is his ground,
will claim to himself what is strictly his due,
an action of trespass will straightway ensue,
you without right on his premises tread,
a simple surmise that the owner is dead."

---

plet was:

"To me 'tis given to die—to you 'tis given
To live: alas, one moment sets us even—
Mark how impartial is the will of heaven."

erbury's conscientious use of his authority as guardian of , we may contrast the feeble complaisance of Wilcocks, who y's amazing couplet:

"Life is a jest and all things show it:
I thought it once, but now I know it."

li ıg, and Atterbury probably
as anybody. The other is not
was written a few months only
eah, it must be what Atterbury
fers to the burial of John Shef-
ckinghamshire, in Henry VII.'s

' the Duke he says and dies ;
ain hopes,' the Prelate cries :
rned peers, I prithee say, man,
knave, the priest or layman ?
ls an infidel confest,
er,' quoth the lordly priest ;
ve, still 'brother dear,' he cries ;
verend prelate lies ?"

s ; but what are the facts ?
ributed to the Duke there
vill begins : "Whenever
e me out of this world,
," and it prescribes an
the words "Christum
Ens entium miserere
ot allow the words
be inscribed on the
Socinian heresy ; but
, and the Duke was

ıgaged in a long
matters, the poet
o the critic, who

dealt almost too faithfully w
But when, in 1721, the poet
the well-known lines on Addis
changes. He tells Pope he
his strength lies, and adds:
should be so glad to see you
of that kind, that I could be
little sneered at in a line or so
the pleasure I should have in r
But Atterbury was one of the
whom the great satirist did
seems to have had a genuine
for him, and, of course, th
way a rival. Pope appea
the defence when Atterb
for complicity in the Ja
he was so nervous at
examined as to his own
he broke down in his e
utter a word.

And so we reach th
very little need be s
the character of the
nothing but satisfactio
But we need not
Englishmen and
Foreigners were ne
George I. was a
ments that were

ry well, if they had been
brought back James III.
attempt to conciliate the
At the coronation Atterbury
g the throne and canopy
rquisites as dean, but the
present. After the rebellio
bishops chose to draw u
confidence in terms that c
he High Churchmen ; and
Atterbury but the "buc
refused to sign. If Atterbury
manage the conspiracy it might
hance of success at a moment
ng of the South Sea Company
iscontent, for Atterbury was a
iver," and there is no reason to
y, which rests only on the autho-
Chancellor Harcourt after he had
Atterbury, that in the general
on Queen Anne's death, the
l to proclaim James III. at Charing
was always the weakness of the
ey did not know whom to trust,
e leading ministers of James were
y. It is interesting to read in a
Stratford's as early as June 1722
ne little dog Harlequin, who was
in the trial a year later. The dog

had been sent by the Earl
called Mrs. Illington:

"We hear Ruffe [*i.e.* Roffen[1]] h
the examination of Johnson, who
had much dealing, as it is said,
man behaved with great presence
othing that can be to Ruffe's pre
ome papers seized at Mrs. Barn
nson lodged, in which there
from France to somebody in
examination, was asked much
dog sent from France. She sa
a dog sent to the Bishop of Roches
they have learned the cant name by
the letters."

The date of this letter is
it was not until August 22 that
arrested.[2] But already on May 1
notes: "Walpole lately made
to Ruffe." How delighted the old
have been if he could have
passed. Among the Atterbury
minster there is a short memoi
of Atterbury's son-in-law, in
us that his father had passed
stairs of the deanery, and the b

[1] The Latinised signature of the Bishop of
[2] Dean Stanley has a curious theory that
secret chamber (*Memorials*, p. 459). But as c
to reach the house through Dean's Yard, the "
not seem to help matters.

on entering that the minister had offered him £5000 a year until the bishopric of Winchester should fall vacant, if he would abstain from opposing the Government. Which means that Walpole must have held at that date incriminating documents, and tried to buy off his enemy before breaking him.

After he had been seven months in the Tower, as there was not evidence enough for a trial at law, a "bill of pains and penalties" was brought into Parliament, and when it had passed the Commons, the bishop was heard in his defence before the Lords. He made, of course, a most able defence, which would probably have secured his acquittal in a law court; but as every one knew where his sympathies lay, it was not to be expected that they should vote like mere jurymen on the bare evidence before them, and accordingly he was condemned by eighty-three votes to forty-three, only one bishop, one of his recalcitrant canons at Christ Church, Gaskell, voting on his side; on which Lord Bathurst made the celebrated jest that the hatred of his episcopal brethren could only be accounted for if, "infatuated like the wild Americans, they fondly hoped to inherit not only the *spoils* but the *abilities* of him whom they should destroy." The sentence was that he should be deprived of all his ecclesi-

astical offices, be incapacitated for holding any civil offices, and be banished for ever from the realm, and that no British subject should hold any intercourse with him except by the royal permission. There are in the Chapter library at Westminster a series of annual licences issued to his daughter to correspond with and visit him —one marked with the large fee of £6, 15s.

It is unnecessary to pursue his history further. He embarked on June 18 with his daughter and son-in-law. The story is well known that at Calais he heard that Bolingbroke, who had quarrelled with the Pretender, was pardoned and allowed to return to England. "Then we are exchanged," said the bishop. He lived nine years abroad, first at Brussels, and then at Paris, afterwards at Montpelier, acting as general adviser for the Pretender, and endeavouring without success to save him from his friends. At last he abandoned the task as hopeless. In 1732 he died, and his body was brought to Westminster, to be buried in the vault he had made when his wife died, "by a particular licence from the Chapter in like manner as had been granted to Dean Neal," at the west end of the nave, and "as far from kings and kesars as the space will admit of." The coffin was opened by the Custom House, to search for lace, really one supposes to search for treasonable papers. No monument

was erected, and the position of the grave was forgotten, until Dean Stanley discovered it, and marked it with an inscription. It was opened again, and for the last time, when a grave was made beside it for Dean Bradley.

ON TWO POETS AND THEIR CRITICS

" So naturalists observe, a flea
Hath smaller fleas that on him prey ;
And these have smaller still to bite 'em."

—SWIFT, *On Poetry.*

ON TWO POETS AND THEIR CRITICS

I

ATTERBURY ON WALLER

I CHANCED lately, in the Chapter library at Westminster, upon a copy of Waller's poems (3rd edition, 1668) which a former owner had enlivened with marginalia, much in the manner of Bentley's famous commentary on "Paradise Lost," and, to judge by the handwriting, of much the same date. The critic had not written his name in the book, or the modern binder had destroyed the page that once carried it; but by great good luck I succeeded in identifying him; and he proved to be no less a person than the Jacobite Bishop of Rochester, Francis Atterbury. The clue was found in a letter of the bishop to his friend Pope, in which, replying to some remarks upon his health, he says:

"One civil thing which you say made me ... you had been reading Mr. Waller; and ... of that image at the end of his copy, ... had bestowed it on one who has ... least part of the character. If ...

the verses lately I am sure you remember them, because you forget nothing.

> "'With such a grace you entertain,
> And look with such contempt on pain,'[1] &c.

"I mention them not upon account of that couplet, but one that follows, which ends with the very same rhymes and words (*appear* and *clear*) that the couplet but one after that does; and therefore in my Waller there is a various reading of the first of these couplets; for there it runs thus:

> "'So lightnings in a stormy air
> Scorch more than when the sky is fair.'

"You will say that I am not very much in pain, nor very busy, when I can relish these amusements, and you will say true; for at present I am in both these respects very easy." (Courthope, xi. 29.)

In other words, Atterbury had been spending a time of sickness in re-writing some of Waller's poems, and took this rather roundabout way of submitting his revised version of a single couplet to the great poet. As, in the volume in question, Atterbury's couplet is written as he gives it with

> [illegible]hat follow are:
> [illegible]anguishing you conquer more,
> [illegible]und us deeper than before.
> [illegible]gs which in storms appear
> [illegible]than when the skies are clear."

the marginal note "These very Rimes [*clear, appear*] follow in y^e^ next Couplet but one," he is to be presumed the author of this and therefore of all the other annotations, which are in the same clear and beautiful hand. This discovery, I confess, threw me at first into a great amazement, because Atterbury has long been credited with the panegyric on Waller prefixed to the additional poems of 1690; and in this book he is displayed as slashing the object of his encomium with a hook as desperate as Bentley's. I turned once more to the famous Preface, trying to read between the lines some word of disapproval, but the very point which the bishop most vigorously attacks in his marginalia is the one on which he heaps most praise in his Preface: "Among other improvements we may reckon that of his rhymes, *which are always good*, and very often the better for being new."

There is no doubt from other references in his letters that Atterbury's admiration for Waller was genuine, and we must suppose therefore that in the interval of thirty years between the Preface and the letter to Pope he had become more critical of his idol, and in particular more sensitive in the matter of rhymes. We may remember that in the interval he had come to know Pope. The reader may be interested by a few specimens of the bishop's skill in revision. It gives us some-

thing of a shock to discover that he lays emending hands on the two of Waller's poems that have some claim to be considered classical, "Go, lovely Rose," and the lines "On a Girdle." Of the former poem he re-writes the first two stanzas in this manner:

> "Go, lovely Rose,
> Tell her who wastes her time and me,
> That nothing blows
> On earth so sweet and fair as she,
> Though wondrous sweet and fair thou be.
>
> Tell her that's young
> And shuns to have her graces spied,
> That hadst thou sprung
> In lonely desarts, all thy pride
> Unsung and unobserv'd had died."

Most readers will prefer the authorised version, as having an easy grace that vanishes in the bishop's more polished verses. In the lines "On a Girdle" he contents himself with re-writing the second stanza, which becomes:

> "It was my Heaven's extremest sphear;
> My Joy, my Grief, my Hope, my Fear,
> (The Stars that guide the course of Love)
> Did all within this Circle move."

Here he certainly pulls the verse together by banishing a line which introduces an entirely new image—"The pale which held that lovely deer" —but again most readers, for the softness of their hearts, will prefer the loose stanza that Waller

wrote, just for the sake of the line that the bishop wished to get rid of. I will give another example presently where the bishop seems to me more successful; meanwhile I will collect his longer pieces of criticism on the poet. It is fair to recollect that they were written during an illness.

"Mr. Waller began to write so early and liv'd so long, y^t^ he had an Opportunity of flattering 4 Successive Princes, y^e^ 2 Jameses, and y^e^ 2 Charles; beside y^e^ intervening Usurper Cromwell, whom he flattered even when Dead; y^e^ rightfull Monarchs, I think, onely while living.

"Waller commends no Poet of his time, that was in any degree a Rival to him, neither *Denham*, nor *Cowly*, nor *Dryden;* nor *Fairfax* himself, to whose versification he owes so much, and upon whose Turn of Verse he form'd his own. S^r^ J. Sucklyn he writes against, and seems pleas'd in exposing the many false thoughts there are in his Copy against Fruition, and besides he knew well y^e^ advantage he had of S^r^ John; particularly in that sort of Verse and manner of writing. He has Copys in praise of y^e^ Translator of Gratius (Mr. Wase, I think), S^r^ W. Davenant, Mr. Sands, and Mr. Evelyn: he knew their Reputation would not hurt his own. Ben Johnson & Fletcher he commends in good earnest: their Dramatic Works gave him no pain, that sort of writing he never pretended to. Denham's high Complement to

Waller in his *Cooper's Hill* deserv'd some return. Mr. Waller has prais'd Chaucer, and borrow'd a fine Allusion to Prince Arthur's shield and y^e^ name of Gloriana from Spencer: but he was not much conversant in, or beholding to, either. Milton's Poem came not forth till Mr. W. was above 60 years old, and, I suppose, he had no Taste of his manner of writing.

"There are but few things in Waller y^t^ shew his acquaintance with y^e^ Latin, fewer still y^t^ would make me think him acquainted with y^e^ Greek Poets. Somewhat of y^e^ Mythology he knew; but that might ly no deeper than Ovid's Metamorphoses. Some allusions to several parts of y^e^ Aeneid; y^e^ story of it, I mean; for as to y^e^ Language he has copy'd little of it. Had he been a perfect Master of Virgil, his Latin Phrase would have crept every where into Waller's English; as we see it doe in Dryden's writings [who yet was far from being a perfect Master of him]. As for his *Cloud-compelling* and 2 or 3 more Compound words, I believe, he went not to y^e^ Original for them; but to some Translation; perhaps Chapman's."

Besides these general criticisms, there are a few annotations on particular passages that will be interesting to any readers Waller may still have, if there are any besides his last and best editor, Mr. Thorn Drury. The bishop identifies

Amoret with Lady Sophia Barkly, and on the line "Yet thy waist is straight and clean" notes on the authority of "D. of B." [*i.e.* John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham] that she was "a little awry." The poem "on the picture of a fair youth taken after he was dead" concludes in the bishop's edition with the words "No wonder then—"; he supplies the feeble section with which the piece now concludes and then comments: "*The rest is lost*—*i.e.* was not worth preserving; for it was actually preserved in Waller's MS. and from thence transcribed at y^e^ bottom of this page. Waller was too judicious to approve, and too lazy to mend these verses, and yet too fond of his own writing to be willing to part even with this scrap. The simile he took from Virgil—

'Necdum fulgor adhuc, necdum sua forma recessit,' &c.

and so far he has succeeded where he had his original in his eye. But——"

On the following lines in the poem "Of the Queen":

"There the poor Lover, that has long endur'd
Some proud Nymph's scorn, of his fond passion cur'd,
Fares like the man who first upon the ground
A glow-worm spy'd, supposing he had found
A moving Diamond, a breathing Stone;
For life it had, and like those Jewels shone:
He held it dear, till, by the springing day
Inform'd, he threw the worthless worm away;"

he notes "This said, in return to Sacharissa's Usage of him: of whom W. has not a word afterwards in his Poems. He wrote these verses to y^e^ Queen upon a hint from herself (says D. of B.), and after he had leave to admire Her, left Sacharissa to be admir'd by Others."

To the song "Behold the brand of Beauty tost" he gives the title "On a lady who danc'd but ill, if she danc'd no better than he writes in this copy"; and in the lines on St. James's Park:

> "Making the circle of their reign compleat,
> Those suns of empire, where they rise they set;"

he first notes in the margin, "Suns do not rise where they set," and then re-writes:

> "The circling Race of Empire there they run,
> And end it where the glorious Course begun."

Parallel passages, the bugbear of every poet, which drew from Tennyson his alliterative outburst against the brood of commentators, "I call them the —— upon the locks of literature," are well represented in the bishop's margins, but as they are for the most part drawn from Fairfax's "Tasso," a book now forgotten, they are not interesting to modern readers. There are frequent cross references also to the places where

Waller repeats himself: but on one only does the bishop comment. The couplet

> "So Jove from Ida did both hosts survey;
> And, when he pleased to thunder, part the fray,"

which appeared originally in the poem "To the King on his Navy," was afterwards introduced into the poem "Upon a War with Spain." On which the bishop exclaims: "Not fair, to steal y^e^ verses he had made on y^e^ King, and apply them to Oliver!"

The passage on Chaucer in the lines "of English Verse" provokes two remarks. The passage is in itself so curious that it deserves transcription:

> "Chaucer his sense can only boast,
> The glory of his numbers lost;
> Years have defac'd his matchless strain;
> And yet he did not sing in vain.
> The beauties which adorned that age,
> The shining subjects of his rage,
> Hoping they should immortal prove,
> Rewarded with success his love."

On the first line the bishop writes "Not so: y^e^ Beauty of his Expression and y^e^ Variety and force of his Numbers do to this day appear in several parts of his Poems, to those who read them with Attentive Skill; which Mr. W. did not." On the last line he writes, "I know not whence W^r^. drew this secret History. I appre-

hend it to be without foundation, and intended onely to introduce y^e^ thought with w^ch^ he resolv'd to end this Copy." It is impossible not to agree with the commentator.

Again, there is a very interesting note on the following stanzas of "An Apology for having loved before":

> "To man, that was in the evening made,
> Stars gave the first delight,
> Admiring, in the gloomy shade,
> Those little drops of light;
> Then at Aurora, whose fair hand
> Removed them from the skies,
> He gazing toward the east did stand;
> She entertained his eyes.
> But when the bright sun did appear
> All those he gan despise;
> His wonder was determin'd there,
> And could no higher rise;
> He neither might nor wished to know
> A more refulgent light;
> For that (as mine your beauties now)
> Employ'd his utmost sight."

The bishop begins by re-writing the passage, and does it so well that I venture to give his version:

> "When first to Man, at evening made,
> The glittering host of night
> Appeared, with wonder he survey'd
> Those scatter'd drops of light.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "But when the Sun ascending shot
> Thro' heaven his glorious ray;
> He all those lesser fires forgot,
> Lost in the blaze of Day.

"And nor desir'd, nor hop'd, to see
A more refulgent light:
Wonder in him, as Love in me,
Had reach'd its utmost height."

I doubt if any one would deny that the bishop here has the best of it, at any rate in the second stanza. Having re-written the passage he proceeds to comment upon it. "This fine thought is taken from an Arabian fiction relating to the birth of Abraham. See it at large in Hist. Arab., c. 6. See it cited, Burnet, 'Archæol.,' p. 102. Earl of Roch^r has done y^e same thing by a noble Reflection in Paschal, ab^t y^e Moment being all we have to dispose of, turning it to Love and a Mistress." The modern reader is familiar with this Arabian fiction in Frederic Myers' *St. Paul*, where it is finely and religiously used. Every one must admire the cleverness of the use to which Waller puts it here, and most readers will follow the good bishop in resenting it.

In conclusion, I can imagine the reader saying, But after all, who now reads Waller? And why should we read him? The answer cannot be given in one word; it will depend on what we expect to find in poetry. If we demand "criticism of life," or if we look for sincerity or passion, we need not go to Waller. But if we are content sometimes to admire a finely turned piece of *vers de société*, Waller has at least half-a-dozen

"copies," as Atterbury calls them, that could not be better done. They are built on much the same model, the ornament being a classical allusion, or a reference to the weather, generally introduced by the word "So." Here are the titles of a few of the best: "To a Lady in a Garden," "To a Lady singing a Song of his composing," "To the mutable Fair," "To Chloris," "To a very young Lady;" not one of which could have been written by anybody else. One of my own favourites is the following little song:

"Peace, babbling Muse!
I dare not sing what you indite;
Her eyes refuse
To read the passion which they write.
She strikes my lute, but, if it sound,
Threatens to hurl it on the ground;
And I no less her anger dread,
Than the poor wretch that feigns him dead,
While some fierce lion does embrace
His breathless corpse, and licks his face;
Wrapp'd up in silent fear he lies,
Torn all in pieces if he cries."

On that even Bishop Atterbury holds his hand.

II

ALARIC WATTS ON WORDSWORTH

THE haunters of old bookshops are familiar with the inevitable shelf of once hardy annuals—Keepsakes, Friendship's offerings, Amulets, Gems, Forget-me-nots, many of them attired in watered silk a little frayed at the edges—which the bookseller preserves in the pious hope that fashion, having wearied of mezzotint, may one day turn to collect specimens of the equally lost art of line-engraving. Meanwhile he will cheerfully part with them at the price of a pirated song, unless they happen to contain an early poem by Mr. Ruskin. The idea of such annual productions came to England about the beginning of last century from Germany, where it had for long been the fashion to present one's friends at the New Year with a *vade mecum* containing useful information diversified with literature ; and the earliest of the English annuals were of the same mixed character. Within the covers of a simple pocket-book, the bulk of which consisted of blank pages for a diary, the happy recipient would find not only a variety of information such as is now embalmed in "Whitaker's Almanack," but also short tales and poems and *jeux d'esprit*, together with one or two engravings.

But in the year of grace 1825 the man of genius arose who evolved an ordered universe out of this chaos of elements by the application of a very simple idea. "Why," he asked himself, "at Christmas more than at any other time, should human beings sandwich their *belles lettres* with the "Annual Register," or the "Annual Register" with their *belles lettres?* And there being no answer to this question in the nature of things, he proceeded to separate what had been confounded, and announced for publication, "The Literary Souvenir and Cabinet of Poetry and Romance," which was to be an annual miscellany of literature, now completely purged from its original dependence upon the "Almanach de Gotha." The success of this new departure was as great as it deserved. It deserved success, not only for its novelty, but because it was based upon insight into human nature. It recognised that there is a large public which will buy literature at Christmas and not at any other time, because it buys not for itself, but to give to others; and it recognised that such a public as this likes the literature it receives to be compounded of sentimental ingredients and garnished with pictures. Six thousand copies of the first issue were sold within the year, at the price of twelve shillings.

The person of genius who devised the "Literary Souvenir" was Mr. Alaric Alexander Watts, in

his day a man of very considerable reputation as a poet. In the year 1824, when he was twenty-seven years old, and while he was meditating his great achievement, he issued a volume of a hundred and fifty pages called "Poetical Sketches," and sold a thousand copies. A letter of Charles Lamb's, written in acknowledgment of the book, has been preserved, and it is interesting to see how he acquitted himself of a task that most poets and critics find sufficiently delicate:

"DEAR SIR,—I beg you to accept my thanks for a copy of your poems, which I have found very elegant and full of fancy. I had seen and admired one of them, attributed to Lord Byron. The volume is externally handsome, and the poetry of a kind, I should judge, to have taken. But you have described feelings too inward, perhaps, to be exposed to odious criticism. I have inadvertently written this short acknowledgment sonnet fashion, in fourteen lines,—but where is the poetry? When your occupations give you leave, I shall hope for the pleasure of seeing you.

"Your obliged,

"C. LAMB."

Without much subtlety in reading between lines we can detect here the exhaustion of interest that in the third sentence drove the writer to praise the book's cover; the kindness of heart that in the fourth sentence impelled him to return to its subject matter; and the pause before the fifth, which yielded the fact that fourteen lines had

already been written, and that consequently no further effort need be made. The reader who does not rank among his hereditary possessions a copy of the "Poetical Sketches" may like to see a specimen of them; and by choice that piece which Lamb had seen attributed to Lord Byron. It is entitled "To Octavia, the infant daughter of the late John Larking, Esq.," and is a poem in seven stanzas, written with something of Byronic fluency and gloom, and something also of Coleridgean sentiment. Two stanzas will perhaps suffice as a witness to its "elegance and fancy":

"Full many a gloomy month hath passed,
On flagging wing, regardless by,
Unmarked by aught save grief, since last
I gazed upon thy bright blue eye,
And bade my lyre pour forth for thee
Its strain of wildest minstrelsy.
For all my joys are withered now,
The hopes I most relied on thwarted,
And sorrow hath o'erspread my brow
With many a shade since last we parted;
Yet 'mid this murkiness of lot,
Young Peri, thou art unforgot.

. . . . . .

"Oh, might my fervent prayers prevail
For blessings on thy future years,
Or innocence, like thine, avail
To save thee from affliction's tears!
Each moment of thy life should bring
Some new delight upon its wing:
And the wild sparkle of thine eye,
Thy guilelessness of soul revealing,

Beam ever thus as brilliantly,
Undimmed save by those gems of feeling,
Those soft, luxurious drops that flow
In pity for another's woe!"

It is not every one, not even every great poet, who can write a successful ode to a baby. Milton, we know, conspicuously failed in his attempt from characteristic lack of humour, while his friend Andrew Marvell as conspicuously succeeded. Mr. Watts had no humour, but he had in large measure what the taste of his day preferred, and that was sensibility. The tear of sensibility moistens every poem in his collection. He weeps, for instance, among the ruins of Kirkstall Abbey, over the more pathetic ruins of his own life and hopes:

"The years have fled, and now I stand
Once more beside thy shattered fane,
Nerveless alike in heart and hand,
How changed by grief and pain,
Since last I loitered here, and deemed
Life was the fairy thing it seemed!

"How many a wild and withering woe
Hath seared my trusting heart since then!
What clouds of blight, consuming slow
The springs that life sustain,
Have o'er my world-vexed spirit past,
Sweet Kirkstall, since I saw thee last!'

The fine derangement of poetical images in the last-quoted stanza must have reminded Lamb, if he got as far, of his own Elizabethans—so like,

and yet how different! In the same strain he mourns in a poem called "Ten Years Ago," which Sir Robert Peel pronounced to be "one of the finest poems in the language." An important paper might be written, and Mr. Stead may already have written it, on "Poems that have appealed to Premiers." We have it, for example, on the authority of Wordsworth that his "Idiot Boy" "was a special favourite with the late Mr. Fox and the present Mr. Canning." But leaving that question, and returning to Alaric Watts, the poems of his that touched the popular heart most were not those already mentioned, but two written in that pitiful metre which Tennyson condescended to use in his "Queen of the May," a line of seven iambic feet with anapæsts thrown in at discretion. One of them was called "The Youngling of the Flock," and the other "The Death of the First-born." The "Youngling of the Flock" celebrated what in all families is an interesting occasion, and put the ordinary paternal sentiment into a jig:

"What though my heart be crowded close with inmates dear but few,
Creep in, my little smiling babe, there's still a niche for you!
And should another claimant rise, and clamour for a place,
Who knows but room may still be found, if it wears as fair a face!"

This particular "youngling" was welcomed by the poet because it "flashed upon his aching sight

when Fortune's clouds were dark," and was therefore aptly compared, after Mr. Wordsworth, to "A radiant star when all beside have vanished from the sky."

Of the other poem no one could speak unkindly who was aware that it embodied the poet's own experience; and it was to this poem that Lamb probably referred when he spoke of the book as expressing feelings "too inward to be exposed to odious criticism." The criticism of that age was too often odious; and of all the critics of the time none was so constantly and deliberately odious as a certain critic on the staff of *Fraser's Magazine*, who saw an easy prey in poor Mr. Watts, and described him in a critical notice as a person who had "some talent in writing verses on children dying of colic."

It was not, however, of Watts's own poetry, but of his criticism of Wordsworth's poetry, that I set out to speak. At the same time I thought it likely that the point of view of his criticism would be better appreciated if his own performance in the art were understood; and if it were recognised that his popularity at the time was far greater than that of Wordsworth. Of this there is unmistakable evidence. While a thousand copies of "Poetical Sketches" were sold, as I have said, in the two years 1824–5, it took six years to get rid of the 1820 edition of Words-

worth, which consisted of only five hundred copies. There is one other point which it may be well to illustrate before proceeding to quote Watts's criticisms, and that is the vigour with which in those days criticism was accustomed to express itself. It may reconcile the reader to the asperity of Mr. Watts if he has before him a specimen of the *critique* of the day, in which Mr. Watts is himself the object of criticism. I quoted above a sentence from *Fraser's Magazine*, and it may be interesting to see the context in which it occurs, because Watts, who was as irritable as a greater poet, founded upon it an action for libel, and was awarded £150 damages. It came in a series of "Literary Portraits," the pictures being by Maclise and the letterpress by the notorious Dr. Maginn. The portraits are not in general caricatures, so that Watts may be excused some annoyance at seeing himself represented as hurrying down somebody's staircase with a picture under each arm, the implication being that he was stealing them to engrave in his annual; as, in fact, had been done by the editor of a rival publication. "We are not particularly sure," says the writer of the article, "what our friend the etcher means by exhibiting Watts in the position in which he is on the opposite page depicted. The attitude of flying downstairs with a picture under each arm and

a countenance indicative of caution is remarkable." The article begins by assuring the public that Mr. Watts was of low birth, which was really not the fact, and that his name was not "Alaric Attila" as he asserted, but plain "Andrew." The "Attila" was, of course, a joke of Maginn's. Having exhausted the fun in Watts's own name, he proceeds to play with his wife's. Mrs. Watts had been christened "Priscilla Maden," which her husband for poetical purposes twisted into "Zillah Madonna," an incautious proceeding in days when nothing was sacred from the baser sort of pressman. The writer then proceeds:

"We feel bound to add that it is not very likely in the usual chances of events that such names as Alaric Attila Watts should have met in matrimony with those of Zillah Madonna Wiffen; and an unkind world may suspect a mystification somewhere; if the scraggiest part of the neck of the world should trouble itself about such things. For us it is sufficient to know that such a person exists as a scribbling man.

"He has some talent in writing verses on children dying of colic, and a skill in putting together fiddle-faddle fooleries which look pretty in print [a reference to the "Literary Souvenir"]. In other respects, he is forty-one years old, of an unwashed appearance, no particular principles, with well-bitten nails, and a great genius for backbiting. There is not a man to whom he has been under an obligation, from Jerdan to Lockhart, from Theodore Hook to Westmacott, from Andrews to Whitaker, from Crofton Croker to Carter Hall, from Wordsworth to Byron, from Scott to Southey, from Landseer to Wilkie,

from the man who fed him from charity to the man who has from equal charity supported his literary repute, whom he has not in his poor way libelled. We are sorry for it for his own sake; such a course redounds to a man's mischief."

We cannot be sorry that criticism of this fashion is extinct. Even in its own day this particular article was considered a very advanced specimen of the mystery; and as Watts had no difficulty in showing, on the evidence of the persons referred to, that not only had he never libelled them, but he had never received their favours, a contemporary jury found the humour of the thing beyond them, and treated it as a libel.

I will now proceed, without further delay, to offer the reader some extracts from the marginalia in a copy of Wordsworth's poems which formerly belonged to Mr. Watts. The candour and directness of the critic will be at once recognised; and the reader who cannot altogether agree with the judgments expressed will find it a useful exercise to point out where they are at fault. I will quote the lines upon which comment is made, and add the annotation in a parallel column:

YARROW UNVISITED

We have a vision of our own, Good!
Ah, why should we undo it?

Nothing can be more beautiful than the *sentiment* of this poem, and the *measure* is flowing as the silver Yarrow herself;

but if the severe test which Wordsworth has applied to Gray's sonnet were applied to the poem it would be reduced to a very small compass indeed. Most of the rhymes, such as they are, to the name of the river are very dearly purchased.

ADDRESS TO THE SONS OF BURNS

'Tis twilight time of good and ill. — Nonsense!

Excellent as is the advice conveyed in these stanzas, they can hardly have been palatable to the persons to whom they were addressed. The poet, in assuming the province of a mentor, would seem to have overlooked the fact that few sons would care to be thus publicly warned against the failings of their father. To whisper in their ear through the trumpet-tongued voice of the public to beware of intemperance is indelicate, to say the least of it.

LUCY GRAY

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
—The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

What does the poet mean by a "human door"? Who ever heard of an *inhuman* door?

She liv'd unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceas'd to be;
But she is in her grave, and oh,
The difference to me!

Silly!

WE ARE SEVEN

There is no doubt that children used to be ignorant of the nature of death, but in modern times no peasant's child would be found as ignorant as Mr. W.'s heroine; and if she were, the silly ignorance of a child would afford no legitimate subject for poetry.

MATTHEW

Yet sometimes, when the secret cup
Of still and serious thought went round.

Was he a solitary dram drinker?

. . . . . .

We walk'd along, while bright and red
Uprose the morning sun.

The sun often sets red, but I never knew it to rise red.

. . . . . .

She seemed as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea.

This is nonsense; a wave can scarcely be called happy.

. . . . . .

And many love me; but by none
Am I enough beloved.

Wordsworth was always raving about not being enough beloved; but he was a constitutionally selfish man, and loved nothing half so well as himself; as S. T. Coleridge once remarked to me, "a very worthy man, very fond of himself," his affected sympathy with rocks, trees, brooks, and flowers serving to excuse his singular want of sympathy with his kind.

TO THE DAISY

He need but look about, and there
Thou art! A friend at hand, to *scare*
His melancholy.

Why scare? Melancholy may be *dispelled*, but is not likely to be *frightened away*, by a daisy!

. . . . . .

Child of the Year!

The daisy is no more a "child of the year" than any other annual flower which comes and goes with the season.

LOUISA

I met Louisa in the shade,
And having seen that lovely maid,
Why should I fear to say
That, nymph-like, she is fleet and strong,
And down the rocks can leap along
Like rivulets in May?

Why, indeed? A mighty athletic young lady! How so robust a young lady could have been nymph-like it is not easy to conceive.

FIDELITY

There sometimes does a leaping fish
Send through the Tarn a lonely cheer.

Nonsense; fish do not cheer.

"SHE WAS A PHANTOM," &c.

Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair.

Twilight has no hair.

TO THE SMALL CELANDINE

Here is a flower of the common pilewort apostrophised as a "star," an "elf," a "prodigal," a "spirit," a "prophet," and finally as the "herald of a mighty band." It excels violets, pansies, kingcups, daisies, primroses, and in fact everything else in the world. Can hyperbole go further? And the poet had been thirty years finding out its beauties, although it was like a "rising sun"!

THE HAPPY WARRIOR

This character of the Happy Warrior is far too indefinite. It would do nearly as well for a Happy Lawyer, a Happy Parson, or a Happy Poet.

ODE TO DUTY

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!	Absurd!
. . . . .	
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong.	Hyperbole!

"THREE YEARS SHE GREW"

Where rivulets dance their wayward round.	Nonsense; rivulets do not dance in a circle.
. . . . .	
And vital feelings of delight Shall rear her form to stately height.	One has heard of good-humour making people fat, but never of delight making ladies tall!

A POET'S EPITAPH

In common things that round us lie Some random truths he can impart, The harvest of a quiet eye *That broods and sleeps on his own heart.*	Much praised and quoted, but nonsense nevertheless.

TO JOANNA

The description of the echo in this poem, imitated from a passage in Drayton's *Polyolbion*, is admirable, but the poem as a whole is silly and unmeaning. Why the poet should engrave the lady's name upon a rock because she had "looked into his eyes" and indulged in a horse laugh which called forth the echoes of all the surrounding rocks it is not easy to understand.

"A NARROW GIRDLE," &c.

What are the scope and moral aim of this poem? The poet and two very idle, if "dear," companions loiter by the side of

Grasmere Lake, watching the progress of the thistle's down upon its surface, watching which way the "invisible breeze" was tending, when they came upon a man fishing, whom they appear to have considered obnoxious to censure for his idleness. It turned out, however, that the poor man, worn down by sickness, gaunt and lean, was fishing for a dinner for his family. Whereupon the Poet and his "beloved" friends sentimentalise on the uncharitableness and hastiness of their censure, and agree to christen the eminence by the somewhat silly designation of "Point Rash-Judgment," and to snivel with serious self-reproach over the precipitancy of their strictures. Such themes are rendered sillier than they would otherwise seem by the oracular pomposity of the verse in which they are recorded. Had the spot been called "Noodledom," it would better have characterised the puerility and inanity of the verse.

THE IDIOT BOY

There was no need to explain to us by means of a long and drivelling poem that an affectionate mother will love her child, idiotic or not.

THE TABLES TURNED

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good
Than all the sages can.

Pantheistical cant.

Come forth and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

It is the eye that watches, and the heart that receives.

GOODY BLAKE AND HARRY GILL

We can see no object for rational sympathy in this vicious old tramp, who fell to cursing in a most wicked spirit, because she had been caught wantonly destroying "stick after stick" of a farmer's fences, and who, when he found her *in flagrante delicto*, let her off easily enough. As for the injunction conveyed

in the last two lines, it conveys no moral but that female tramps are to be allowed not only to plunder, but to destroy with impunity. As a composition the poem is sheer drivel.

TO MY SISTER

No joyless forms shall regulate
Our living Calend*ar*:
We from to-day, my Friend,
will date
The opening of the *year*.

Yur!

. . . . .

Come forth and *feel* the sun.

This might be proper if addressed to a blind person.

THE FEMALE VAGRANT

My father was a good and
pious man,
An honest man by honest
parents bred.

If a good and pious man he could hardly have been other than honest.

. . . . .

I lived upon what casual
bounty yields,
Now coldly given, now utterly
refused.

How could she live upon bounty refused?

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

And 'tis my faith that every
flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

Pantheistical cant.

THE LEECH-GATHERER.

A gentle answer did the old
man make,
In courteous speech which
forth he slowly *drew*.

A man does not *draw out* a speech, as he would a pocket-handkerchief.

ALICE FELL

A child in getting up behind a chaise entangles her cloak in the wheel. The poet buys her a new one, and then perpetuates his own generosity in a poem.

BEGGARS

It would be difficult to discover the aim, moral or literary, of such poems as this. The poet, who goes wandering about the world in search of subjects for his muse, appears to have encountered a very tall beggar-woman of the gypsy order, in a long drab-coloured cloak reaching to her feet, but whether she had on any underclothing or not he of course "could not know."[1] She begged of him in the accustomed mendicant whine of her order, and professed to have undergone misfortunes which he assures us "he knew could not have befallen her," but gives her what she asks for, thoroughly satisfied that she is an impostor, because she has on a clean cap, and is a creature "beautiful to see," "a weed of glorious feature!" A little further on he falls in with her two children, both of whom importune him for alms. He discovers a resemblance between them and the tall gypsy, which leaves him in no doubt of their parentage, on one side at least. But they insist that their mother is dead. "Sweet boys," says the Bard to the young pickpockets, "you're telling me a lie," and they, finding that he is not to be done, hurry off in search of some more practicable victim. In the choice of subjects thus strikingly deficient in every requisite we look for in a poem there is surely a great obliquity of taste, a hankering after themes which have nothing but their vulgarity to recommend them. Yet upon incidents hardly better entitled to selection are a large proportion of poems in these volumes founded, incidents not merely repulsive but sometimes absolutely loathsome.

TO THE SPADE OF A FRIEND

The lines might have been addressed to any other relic of Mr. Wilkinson with equal propriety. To call a spade the

[1] Wordsworth subsequently altered "What other dress she had I could not know" into "descending with a graceful flow."

"inspiring mate" of its owner is nonsense; equally so to talk of its "own dear Lord." The idea of a spade as a chimney ornament is——!

"MY HEART LEAPS UP," &c.

The Child is Father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

Natural piety is, of course, natural religion, which is pantheism.

"I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD," &c.

In this poem the single idea is that of a bed of daffodils "dancing" in the breeze. As, however, the root of the flower remains without motion, it cannot be said to dance. The image is a false one.

TO THE DAISY

Who shall reprove thee? Reprove a daisy!

But enough has been quoted. It is fair to note on the other side that there are a few poems that Watts praises without stint. The "Solitary Reaper" he allows to be "full of graces of style and refinement of feeling"; and the "Cuckoo" and the "Remembrance of Collins" he ranks among the poet's "most exquisite poems." The "Power of Music" is "a model of simplicity without silliness," and "Loud is the Vale" is "a noble poem, every way worthy of the poet's genius." But it is the sonnets which rouse his enthusiasm. "Most of Wordsworth's sonnets,"

he says, "are good, but many of them are absolute perfection; and when it is remembered that he would sometimes occupy a week in polishing a poem of fourteen lines, their completeness is not surprising." He has some interesting remarks on Wordsworth's corrections of his text. "Few poets," he says, "of any age have made such numerous and important alterations in their poetical writings as Wordsworth. When engaged, in 1825, in negotiations with Messrs. Hurst & Robinson for the publication of a new edition of his works, Mrs. Wordsworth wrote to me to request that I would complete the arrangements as soon as possible, in order that the printing might begin. She urged, as a reason, that her husband would otherwise spoil his poems by repeated alterations. This indecision of taste was a sign of weakness, and a practical refutation of the principles on which his poems profess to have been written. His sonnets on the 'River Duddon' and the poems which were associated with them were virtually a repudiation of the theory with which he originally set out; and from that moment he seemed desirous of making his earlier works harmonise with them." That is an interesting theory, and one which, if opportunity offered, it would be worth while investigating. Mr. Watts continues: "Few great modern poets have altered their pieces to any great extent, and

if Akenside, Faulconer, and one or two others who will readily suggest themselves be excepted, there is hardly one of our great poets who have exhibited any indecision whatever. Milton, Dryden, Pope, Butler, Churchill and Prior, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Johnson, Goldsmith, Beattie, Gray, and of our moderns, Byron, Campbell, Rogers, Moore, Crabbe, Coleridge, Scott, Joanna Baillie, have shown no such indecision, having left their works to posterity with little or no alteration or emendation. They felt their strength, and relied upon it." It would be interesting to learn whether there has been preserved a copy of Tennyson's poems in which Alaric Watts has expressed himself with the same freedom and pungency about that great man as about his predecessor in the laureateship. In the first edition of "Men of the Time" (1856), which Watts projected and edited, he allows Tennyson a third of the space reserved for himself.

ENGLISH PATRIOTIC POETRY

ENGLISH PATRIOTIC POETRY

WITH the death of Browning and Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Rossetti, and William Morris, English poetry passed into a silver age. The hopes and fears kindled by so many startling discoveries in the region of natural science had exhausted themselves; that pre-occupation with the Middle Ages which had followed upon the Oxford movement had passed; and no new passion had arisen to take their place. We had settled down in poetry either to copy the old masters with Mr. Watson, or to embroider natural scenery with Mr. Bridges, or with Mr. Yeats to play with Celtic dreams. All at once, upon this ingenious trifling came a great war in South Africa, and along with it a generous and unanticipated response to our imperial needs throughout the length and breadth of our colonies. Once more we were in a period of storm and stress; and the questions presented in the field of literature began once more to be of intense interest. Would the new afflatus find a new poet through whom to speak? If so, in what shape would the

new work of art be born? And then, how would the silver writers behave under the strain? Which of them would "awake the Spartan fife"? It may be worth while to consider how far and in what way these questions have been answered.

We may preface the inquiry by examining some characteristics of the patriotic poetry which the great poets of England have bequeathed to us from bygone ages. The new-born pride of Elizabethan Englishmen in their country, which succeeded the defeat of the invincible Armada, was reflected in the historical plays of Shakespeare. In 1593 appeared "Richard II.," in 1594 "King John," and in 1597–8 the two parts of "Henry IV." and "Henry V." The first point that strikes a reader who looks at these plays from our present point of view, is that Shakespeare has chosen his subjects in an age, far removed from the politics of his own day, when the national enemy was France and not Spain. By so doing he made indeed a sacrifice of the immediate sympathies of his audience, but he gained far more than he lost. In taking his facts not from news-sheets but from the pages of old chroniclers, he chose a material already far on its way to be sublimed into poetry, already disencumbered of unessential detail, and with the valour of its personages already heightened to heroic stature, and their sorrows and failures deepened to a tragic intensity. The truth at

which the poet aims is independent of particular circumstances; if he can display upon a conspicuous stage the qualities that make a great king or a great people, or the qualities that lead them to ruin, it is of no consequence to him that John Lackland and Richard of Bordeaux were worse or better men than he has described them; he is content if his personages have so much verisimilitude that the historical sense of his audience is not outraged.

In the second place it is apparent that such patriotic appeals as are introduced into his plays arise naturally out of their context, and can with difficulty be separated from it. The influence upon the spectator's mind is a reflected influence; the speeches cannot be shouted across the footlights; they must be uttered within the limits of the stage to the *dramatis personæ*. In so conditioning his appeals—for it hardly needs insistence that the appeal is really to the audience—Shakespeare's instinct proved itself infallible as ever. There seem to be two chief reasons for such a course. In the first place patriotism is so delicate a plant that it needs always the support of this or that great triumph or sorrow, if it is to flourish at all. Except in regard to some such special circumstances we should be as little disposed to love our country as to love the air we breathe. A second reason is that the temperament of

Englishmen is—or was—so shamefaced and undemonstrative that it will hardly tolerate appeals to patriotism except at a crisis, and will not tolerate them even then if the note is pitched high. One of the excellent things in Mr. Rudyard Kipling's not altogether excellent book "Stalky and Co." is his description of the shamefaced disgust that fell upon an audience of boys when a too demonstrative Member of Parliament concluded a patriotic harangue by waving the Union Jack. Shakespeare, although he wrote when the full tide of Elizabethan patriotism was flowing, wrote no patriotic lyrics.

A third point is that, notwithstanding this deliberate lowering of the emotional key, and the choice of what may seem a pointedly unemphatic vocabulary, Shakespeare's patriotic appeals go home to their mark, and as certainly to-day as when they were first written. Thus it is with lines like those with which "King John" concludes :—

> "Now these her princes are come home again,
> Come the three corners of the world in arms,
> And we shall shock them. Naught shall make us rue,
> If England to itself do rest but true."

Again, the famous description of England in Gaunt's dying speech, so studiously simple and restrained for the most part, rises indeed at the end to something of lyric intensity, but only that

the wave of emotion may fall over and break in a passion of shame and pity; and even so the speech is placed in the mouth of a dying man, kindled to prophetic rapture of affection and wrath by his approaching end:—

> "This happy breed of men, this little world . . .
> This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land,
> Dear for her reputation through the world,
> Is now leas'd out,—I die pronouncing it,—
> Like to a tenement or pelting farm."

But besides the way of indirect instruction in the causes and conditions of national welfare, such as Shakespeare employs in "Richard II." and "King John," and besides that of direct and rousing appeals such as he introduces incidentally in these dramas, there is a third way in which patriotic themes may be successfully treated, and that is by the description of heroic exploits. Shakespeare's masterpiece in this mode is "Henry V.," which is a chronicle-history of the battle of Agincourt, just enough dramatised to supply an interest in the characters and fortunes of the two sides, and so in the unexpected but inevitable issue. Here also Shakespeare is careful to keep the key low; he attributes success not to any superhuman valour in the English army—which he exhibits in the persons of certain very human specimens of its component nationalities, Captains Gower, Fluellen, MacMorris, and Jamy—but partly

to the English doggedness, partly to the vain-gloriousness of their foes, and not least to the prowess of their heroic and religious king. The only victories worth celebrating are those which have been won against odds; for these have depended not only upon physical but upon moral qualities. It is upon the patience and cheerfulness of the English quite as much as upon their valour that Shakespeare rivets our attention:—

"Proud of their numbers, and secure in soul,
The confident and over-lusty French
Do the low-rated English play at dice;
And chide the cripple tardy-gaited night,
Who, like a foul and ugly witch, doth limp
So tediously away. The poor condemnèd English,
Like sacrifices, by their watchful fires
Sit patiently and inly ruminate
The morning's danger."

Michael Drayton, who sang the same great victory in a ballad measure, is no less careful of the Englishman's modest susceptibilities. He emphasises the pride of the French in sending to the king for ransom, and Henry's heroism in refusing to be ransomed, and averts the evil eye by rhetorically questioning whether Englishmen were in his day as brave as their ancestors:

"Oh, when shall Englishmen
With such acts fill a pen,
Or England breed again
Such a King Harry?"

But, having satisfied these moral and Anglo-Saxon conventions, he can surrender himself to the strong joy of battle ; and never before or since in English has fighting been sung in so swift and vigorous a line. There are critics who would deprive Drayton of all the honour of this magnificent poem, on the plea of some quite imaginary ballad, now lost, from which he drew his inspiration ; just as there are critics who wish to claim for Shakespeare Drayton's magnificent sonnet, "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part." Happily Drayton has left work in each kind which, though not equal to these masterpieces, approaches sufficiently near to afford evidence that they are from the same hand. The "Virginian Voyage" is a patriotic ballad, with a slow *staccato* movement, like a series of notes on a trumpet, which is not so well known as it deserves. But it does not attain to the rank of the "Ballad of Agincourt." The very first line of this ballad,

"Fair stood the wind for France,"

is an inspiration of genius, as happy as the old Hebrew boast, "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera," if not, indeed, happier, as being content with implying rather than stating that the heavenly powers were on the side of the English.

We have to pass from the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth to the still more spacious days of

Queen Victoria before we come upon a second great era of national poetry; and for any large and comparable achievement in this field we must pass from the plays and ballads of Shakespeare and Drayton to the plays and ballads of Tennyson, who was a learned student of their methods as well as a poet of great and original genius. As the disciple of Shakespeare, Tennyson must be held to have achieved some successes but to have failed upon the whole. It cannot be said, even by Tennyson's greatest admirer, that in his plays of "Queen Mary," "Harold," and "Becket," he has had Shakespeare's success in fusing the national and personal interests. In all of them, what dramatic interest there is concerns the fortunes of the chief character as an individual, not as the representative of England; and the interest is commonly but languid. But in the patriotic speeches which are introduced here and there he is undoubtedly successful, and in Shakespeare's own manner. How entirely subservient to the play and dramatically in key, and yet at the same time interesting and affecting to the audience, is the dream of the dying Confessor, in "Harold":—

> "The green tree!
> Then a great Angel past along the highest
> Crying 'The doom of England,' and at once
> He stood beside me, in his grasp a sword
> Of lightnings, wherewithal he cleft the tree
> From off the bearing trunk, and hurl'd it from him

Three fields away, and then he dash'd and drench'd,
He dyed, he soak'd the trunk with human blood,
And brought the sunder'd tree again, and set it
Straight on the trunk, that thus baptized in blood
Grew ever high and higher, beyond my seeing,
And shot out sidelong boughs across the deep
That dropt themselves, and rooted in far isles
Beyond my seeing: and the great Angel rose
And past again along the highest crying
'The doom of England!'"

It is as the pupil of Drayton that Tennyson has plucked his fairest laurels as a patriotic poet. "The Charge of the Light Brigade" perhaps lacks the superb freedom and swiftness of movement that characterise its model, and it ends altogether too tamely, but it has distinction of its own, and must rank as one of the few successful battle-pieces of our day—far more successful than its companion piece, "The Charge of the Heavy Brigade." As a balladist, however, Tennyson presently outdid his master. Even the "Ballad of Agincourt" reads like a youthful experiment by the side of the "Ballad of the *Revenge*"—so brilliant is the writing, so majestic the rhythm, so admirably varied the metre, lengthening and falling short according to the stress of the narrative, as though the lines were veritably inspired with life. Nor does the "Defence of Lucknow" fall far behind this noble poem.

But besides thus reviving old traditions of national poetry, Tennyson broke new ground, and

that in two ways. In the first place, he adventured the perilous enterprise of the patriotic lyric. His first crude attempts, such as "Love thou thy land," may be unhesitatingly dismissed as failures. The freedom which an Englishman loves is, indeed, "sober-suited," and no one abhors hysterical enthusiasm so much as he; at the same time he can be made to yawn. In "Maud," however, a poem which was the direct outcome of the Crimean war, a "monodrama," as it was called, Tennyson invented for himself a form which should allow him all the freedom and force of lyrical utterance, while it also secured him the shelter of a *dramatis persona* behind whom he could speak; and into the lyrics of "Maud" he poured a palinode of all such crude glorification of industrial peace as had inspired "Locksley Hall." Tennyson performed not one of his least services to the Empire when he wrote such lines as—

"For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the foam,
That the smooth-faced, snub-nosed rogue would leap from his counter and till,
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yard-wand, home."

Tennyson's second great and original contribution to national poetry, which in point of time came first, was his "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington." It may seem astonishing that

English poetry should possess so few eulogies of its national heroes; for to celebrate a great warrior would seem a natural, almost an obvious, way of handing on the torch of his patriotism. The fact is that such eulogies are numberless, but that they are forgotten almost as soon as written, because in so few cases have they been written by poets.

> "Who hath not read of fam'd Ramillia's plain,
> Bavaria's fall, and Danube choak'd with slain?
> Exhausted themes!"

asks Mr. Tickell in a poem "On the Prospect of Peace"; but all these battle-pieces have long ago been gathered to oblivion, along with Mr. Tickell's own ode. Even Addison's once famous eulogy of Marlborough is now remembered only for one profane simile. That being so, it may be hazardous to prophesy for Tennyson's ode a longer life. It has, perhaps, here and there a somewhat uncertain sound, as though feeling its way, an almost inevitable result of its irregular structure; but it contains at least one sonorous passage—its eighth section—which, as long as the present standards of good writing hold, must rank high among our few patriotic masterpieces:

> "Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
> The path of duty was the way to glory:
> He, that ever following her commands,
> On with toil of heart and knees and hands,

> Through the long gorge to the far light has won
> His path upward, and prevail'd,
> Shall find the toppling crags of duty scaled
> Are close upon the shining table-lands
> To which our God Himself is moon and sun."

In the interval between Shakespeare and Tennyson there are to be found occasional pieces which deserve a place in any collection of patriotic poetry, as, for instance, Marvell's fine "Horatian Ode" to Cromwell; but for the most part they have the misfortune to be inspired by party hopes and fears rather than by enthusiasm for the whole State. From Milton we have disappointingly little; but the sonnets we might well have looked for from him were at last written by Wordsworth. It is interesting to know that it was with Milton before him as a model that Wordsworth first experimented in sonnet-writing; for undoubtedly there passed from the elder poet to the younger something more than the mere rhythm and cadence of his lines; there passed also the heroic style and what underlies heroic style—dignity of thought, passion of conviction, self-restraint. Not unworthy to find a place by these admirable and happily well-known sonnets of Wordsworth are certain sonnets written by the late Archbishop Trench at the time of the Crimean war. They are inspired by a like dignity and passion, and though they do not attain to the majesty of Wordsworth's movement, and do not burn them-

selves into the memory by a perfect adequacy of expression, yet they are well worth studying, for they are the utterances not only of a Christian scholar and a gentleman, which is much, but also of one who was, in his measure, a genuine poet. The thought of the following poem was probably in the minds of many during the late war:

"Yes, let us own it in confession free,
That when we girt ourselves to quell the wrong,
We deemed it not so giant-like and strong,
But it with our slight effort thought to see
Pushed from its base; yea, almost deemed that we,
Champions of right, might be excused the price
Of pain, and loss, and large self-sacrifice,
Set ever on high things by Heaven's decree.
What if this work's great hardness was concealed
From us, until so far upon our way
That no escape remained us, no retreat—
Lest, being at an earlier hour revealed,
We might have shrunk too weakly from the heat
And shunned the burden of this fiery day?"

Proceeding from these legacies of the past to our own generation, and asking what we have to put beside them, the answer must be, first, that it is too soon to demand the greater works which the recent revival of patriotic enthusiasm may perchance inspire. At the same time the fact must be noted that there have been no plays in recent years which have sought inspiration in England's heroical achievements; and also there have been no great odes, notwithstanding the unprecedented

flow of verse at the time of the late Queen's Jubilee. On the other side of the account must be reckoned not a few ballads that deserve attention, and much lyrical work of various kinds, with a considerable outburst of popular song. To speak first of the ballads. The first in order of appearance were Mr. Rudyard Kipling's. These were especially interesting to the literary critic because they were the experiments of a past-master of the banjo and concertina upon a more warlike instrument, the drum. Mr. Kipling's most effective ballad measure is the rhymed couplet of six or seven accents, though accent seems a word hardly strong enough for the thump he manages to give. Not only does the metre thump, but the words thump as well. Never were words so emphatic strung together in so emphatic a metre. And this is an undoubted merit for the purpose in view, since the drum is an even more martial instrument than either fife or bugle. Again, not only is Mr. Kipling's vocabulary the most emphatic in the world, but it is also the most world-wide. No more bitter punishment for Little Englanders could be devised than to set them to paraphrase and annotate Mr. Kipling's ballad of "The English Flag."

"The East Wind roared:—From the Kuriles, the Bitter Seas, I come,
And me men call the Home-Wind, for I bring the English home.

Look—look well to your shipping! By the breath of my mad typhoon
I swept your close-packed Praya and beached your best at Kowloon!
The reeling junks behind me, and the racing seas before,
I raped your richest roadstead—I plundered Singapore!
I set my hand on the Hoogli; as a hooded snake she rose,
And I heaved your stoutest steamers to roost with the startled crows."

This style of writing is undoubtedly a great improvement on the metre of Macaulay's Armada ballad, as its encyclopædic references eclipse Macaulay's more modest and insular geography lesson. A better piece of work, however, with scarcely a weak line in it, and telling a tale as a ballad should, is the "Ballad of East and West," which has already achieved much popularity in places where they recite.

Another and a more elegant writer of ballads is Mr. Henry Newbolt. Mr. Newbolt's manner is less stark and trenchant than Mr. Kipling's, and he has more care for the airs and graces of verse. His instrument is not the drum, but the flute, which he uses to excellent purpose. His interest is in such incidents and adventures as were sung by the late Sir Francis Hastings Doyle in the "Loss of the *Birkenhead*," and "The Private of the Buffs"—a poem which, without being in any way remarkable, hits exactly the right note, perhaps because it is neither too clever nor too

violent nor too sentimental. Mr. Newbolt is a more cunning master of verse than his predecessor, though he could not be a more skilful conjurer of our tears. Some of his best pieces, such as "The Fighting *Téméraire*" and "Drake's Drum," are the outcome of that revived interest in sea-power which, both here and on the Continent, is one of the chief signs of the times. It is an admirable spirit, admirably expressed, that animates the following stanza:—

"Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Slung atween the round shot, listenin' for the drum,
An' dreamin' arl the time of Plymouth Hoe.
Call him on the deep seas, call him up the Sound,
Call him when you sail to meet the foe;
Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag flyin',
They shall find him ware and wakin', as they found him long ago!"

Another very pleasing ballad is that called "Gillespie," which chronicles an incident of a Sepoy mutiny. It is the story of a ride, and tells how—

"Riding at dawn, riding alone,
Gillespie came to false Vellore."

In its way it is as clever a translation of a horse's legs into metre as Tennyson's "Proputty, Pro-

putty!" or Browning's "How They Brought the Good News to Ghent":—

> "Their rowels ripped their horses' sides,
> Their hearts were red with a deeper goad,
> But ever alone, before them all,
> Gillespie rode, Gillespie rode."

Another good ballad is that of "John Nicholson," a successful imitation of the old folk-ballad, never quite deserting modern English, but suggestive of much that echoes in the chambers of memory. Such stories are well worth the telling, and we hope Mr. Newbolt may find himself inspired to write more of them; certainly there can be no better lessons for the young in Imperial responsibility.

I will now proceed to glance at what has been accomplished of late in the domain of the pure lyric. It has been pointed out above that the great poets of the sixteenth century, whom Tennyson elected to follow, instinctively avoided a lyrical expression for purposes of patriotic appeal, and some reasons were suggested that seemed to justify their reserve. It is a little disconcerting therefore to find how many patriotic effusions in this age have taken this questionable form. Still, it has to be remembered that different ages have their characteristic methods, and Art is justified of all her children; so that the

matter must not be prejudged. It may be that the sentiment of patriotism has in these last days reached a passionate and self-conscious stage at which even Englishmen must express it by "the lyrical cry"; and Mr. Kipling has taken the pains to assure doubters, with all the emphasis of which his banjo-metre is capable, that—

"There are nine-and-sixty ways of constructing tribal lays,
And—every—single—one—of—them—is—right."

We turn therefore to Mr. Kipling's patriotic lyrics, and first to those with which he opened his volume called "The Seven Seas." The "Song of the Sons" is built up of lines in the manner of Morris's "Sigurd the Volsung," with interludes suggested by Tennyson's "Dream of Fair Women." It is full of just sentiments and reflections, as well as of accurate information, but we cannot imagine any one but a reviewer reading it twice, or indeed reading it through. The "Deep Sea Cables" is an effort to realise the poetry that is latent in the submarine telegraph, but it does not take the breath away. The one piece that on literary grounds must rank as a success is not sung to the lyre but to the drum. We may regret that it should have been written; we may regret that there is no duty so obvious, no piece of risk or self-sacrifice so necessary, but Mr. Kipling will drag it to the light and insist upon the astounding

virtue and valour which drive Englishmen to carry it through; but that is a moral question; as a literary feat there is no denying the force of the song of which the last verse runs as follows:—

"We must feed our sea for a thousand years,
For that is our doom and pride,
As it was when they sailed with the *Golden Hind*,
Or the wreck that struck last tide—
Or the wreck that lies on the spouting reef
Where the ghastly blue-lights flare.
If blood be the price of admiralty,
If blood be the price of admiralty,
If blood be the price of admiralty,
Lord God, we ha' bought it fair."

Let us not forget, however, that Mr. Kipling has written one lyric, admirable alike in manner and in matter, a lyric which has gone to the heart of his countrymen, for it chimes with their own deep-seated convictions—the stanzas called "Recessional," which appeared on the morrow of the second Jubilee. To my mind it is the most astonishing piece of work Mr. Kipling has done, because it is the antipodes of the sentiment to which he usually gives utterance, a sentiment that has been immortalised in the words of Mr. Gilbert:—

"For he himself has said it,
And it's greatly to his credit
That he's an Englishman!"

It is as if some strain in the blood contradictory to the usual tenour of Mr. Kipling's emotion had

for once mastered the instrument of expression :—

"The tumult and the shouting dies ;
The Captains and the Kings depart.[1]
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget !"

Another writer who in our day essayed to strike the patriotic lyre was the late William Ernest Henley. Mr. Henley had ever shown himself a writer not afraid of passion, and he had done the present generation a great service by the excellent collection he made of the best English heroic poems ; if therefore the lyric of English patriotism, which Shakespeare did not write, was to be written at all, it might perhaps have been written by him. Of the poems called "For England's Sake," that which most directly challenges the impossible task is "Pro Rege Nostro," which opens thus :—

"What have I done for you,
England, my England?
What is there I would not do,
England, my own ?
With your glorious eyes austere,
As the Lord were walking near,
Whispering terrible things and dear
As the song on your bugles blown,
England—
Round the world on your bugles blown !"

[1] An interesting proof of the popularity of this poem was recently given by an evening gazette, which charged a writer, who referred to "the thunder of the captains and the shouting," with misquoting Mr. Kipling !

There are probably few Englishmen who on reading this poem would not feel uncomfortable, for we do not readily conceive our country as a lady with austere eyes; and this instinctive distaste might very well be reinforced by the reflection that to say "England, my own," is to court the individual sentiment at the very instant of trying to rouse the national sentiment: that is to say, it is a rhetorical contradiction in terms. It seems to indicate a vein of feeling specially cherished by Mr. Henley, for he wrote his concluding sonnet—

> "To the glory and praise of the green land
> That bred *my* women and that holds *my* dead."

The rest of Mr. Henley's patriotic verse can hardly be said to aim at literary expression. It is full of violent phrases like "God's own red," which seems to mean blood, and "God's own rose," which is said to mean death, with here and there a fine phrase or two to show that the author could have written, if he had been content to write, like the great masters:—

> "Patient, hardy, masterful, merciful, high, irresistible, just,
> For a dead man's sake, and in England's name, he has done as he would and must."

That is, surely, an excellent couplet; and the opening lines of the "Last Post" are even finer:—

> "The day's high work is over and done,
> And these no more will need the sun;

Blow, you bugles of England, blow !
These are gone whither all must go,
Mightily gone from the field they won."

The patriotic lyric, then, has not been written either by Mr. Kipling or Mr. Henley; and we may safely say it will not be written in this generation, for it is foreign to the genius of Englishmen, which requires a more reflective note. The nearest that Englishmen care to go to lyrical expression about national affairs is such a sonnet as Wordsworth's "Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour," or the dedicatory poem appended to Tennyson's "Idylls," which contains a memorable passage about the retention of the colonies:

"'So loyal is too costly ! friends—your love
Is but a burthen : loose the bond, and go.'
Is this the tone of Empire ? here the faith
That made us rulers ? this, indeed, her voice
And meaning, whom the roar of Hougoumont
Left mightiest of all peoples under heaven ?
What shock has fool'd her since, that she should speak
So feebly ? wealthier—wealthier—hour by hour !
The voice of Britain, or a sinking land,
Some third-rate isle half-lost among her seas ?"

or again, such a majestic simile as that in Matthew Arnold's "Heine's Grave."

"Yes, we arraign her, but she
The weary Titan ! with deaf
Ears, and labour-dimmed eyes,
Regarding neither to right
Nor left, goes passively by,
Staggering on to her goal ;

Bearing on shoulders immense
Atlantëan, the load
Well-nigh not to be borne
Of the too vast orb of her fate."

Among modern poems which strike this high reflective note are two school odes, one by Mr. Bridges about Eton, printed in his "Shorter Poems," and one by Mr. Newbolt called "Clifton Chapel."

It remains to speak about patriotic songs. These fall into two classes: those which have literary merit, and can be said as well as sung, and those which depend altogether for success upon some popular air. The finest specimens we possess in the former class are Campbell's "Ye Mariners of England," and the "Battle of the Baltic," which are full of a spirited rhetoric. The first of these especially is a fine piece of writing, with a very effective rhyme within the verse in the seventh line of the stanza:—

"Ye mariners of England
That guard our native seas:
Whose flag has braved a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze!
Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe:
And sweep through the deep
While the stormy winds do blow;
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow."

In a different manner, deserving of no less praise, are Dibdin's songs. This remarkable man

was probably the most voluminous song-writer the world has ever seen, after Solomon, for his songs were nine hundred, a tithe of them being concerned with the sea. These must rank as his best. He says of them with pardonable pride, in his autobiography, "My songs have been the solace of sailors in long voyages, in storms, in battle; and they have been quoted in mutinies to the restoration of order and discipline." He is said to have brought more men into the navy than the press-gangs; and for three years he enjoyed a well-deserved Government pension. Dibdin's songs are perhaps not known so well to-day as they deserve, though a few favourites like "Tom Bowling" are still occasionally sung. His sons also wrote songs. Thomas Dibdin's are the nearest in style that a past generation could show to those of Mr. Kipling:—

"'Who'll serve the King?' cried the sergeant aloud:
Roll went the drum, and the fife played sweetly;
'Here, master sergeant,' said I from the crowd,
'Is a lad who will answer your purpose completely.'
My father was a corporal, and well he knew his trade,
Of women, wine, and gunpowder he never was afraid:
He'd march, fight—left, right,
Front flank—centre rank,
Storm the trenches—court the wenches;
Love the rattle—of a battle,
Died with glory—lives in story.
And like him, I found a soldier's life, if taken smooth and rough,
A very merry, very down derry, sort of life enough."

In the same rattling devil-may-care strain were other songs of the period, like Sir Walter Scott's "Bold Dragoon":—

"'Twas a Maréchal of France, and he fain would honour gain,
And he longed to take a passing glance at Portugal from Spain;
With his flying guns this gallant gay,
And boasted *corps d'armée*—
O, he feared not our dragoons, with their long swords boldly riding,
Whack, fal de ral, &c.

"To Campo Mayor come, he had quietly sat down,
Just a fricassee to pick while his soldiers sacked the town,
When 'twas *peste! morbleu! mon Général*,
Hear the English bugle call!
And behold the light dragoons, with their long swords boldly riding,
Whack, fal de ral, &c."

Other popular national songs are Garrick's "Heart of Oak," Liversedge's "Roast Beef of Old England," and so forth. Mr. Kipling's "Barrack-Room Ballads" are not national songs in the same sense as these, for they are written not *for* the soldier, but *about* him. They are remarkable not only for the extraordinary *élan* of their metre, a characteristic of all Mr. Kipling's verse-writing, but also from the fact that they are written in a cockney vernacular. This is not a superficial oddity, but a part of the realism which is so striking a feature of Mr. Kipling's work. The whole tone of mind represented in the "Ballads" is one of glorified vulgarity; in the

jokes, the half-sentimental quotations from Scripture, the unconscious profanity, and the pervading cleverness, we have characteristics of the type that supplies the most promising soldiers; though of course these qualities are heightened by genius, and the songs are emphatically works of art. It is not improbable that the "Barrack-Room Ballads" will remain Mr. Kipling's most permanent contribution to Victorian literature; and if they have succeeded, as one has reason to think they have, in thoroughly rousing the interest of the middle classes in the British soldier, they have once more demonstrated that in a democracy song is more powerful than the legislature.

Political songs that are sung usually depend for their effect more upon the air than their words. Even in the case of our National Anthem and "Rule Britannia," where the words are fairly adequate, it is probably the splendour of the music that plays the larger part in setting free enthusiasm. Songs that have become celebrated in a political crisis will always be found to have owed more to the infectiousness of their tunes than to any poetical or rhetorical force in the writing. It is enough in such cases that the words should carry a plain meaning. "Lillibullero," which played no small part in making the country too hot to hold James II., is the

merest piece of doggerel, about an Irish appointment, in which Englishmen who sang the song could have had little interest; but the tune, which is Purcell's, breathes the very spirit of contemptuous raillery; even to whistle it against any institution is to cover it with ridicule. MacDermott's song, "We don't want to fight," owed its vogue chiefly to the slow and deliberate truculence of its tune, which enabled the bellicose part of the populace to swear with great emphasis by their god Jingo, and so win for themselves an everlasting name. If this and similar songs had made more demand upon the refinement of the singers, they would have been ineffectual for their purpose. Every now and then a great poet feels it to be his duty to write a national song; but the song never becomes popular, because the poet cannot hit the level of the vulgar taste. Tennyson once or twice made the attempt. In the first excitement of the Volunteer movement he wrote "Riflemen, form," which even its pun did not make popular. He composed also a song for the navy, which was not published. It is written in a simple metre, but it does not escape a certain *de haut en bas* air, that would have been fatal to it:—

"They say some foreign powers have laid their heads together,
To break the pride of Britain, and bring her on her knees;

There's a treaty, so they tell us, of some dishonest fellows
To break the noble pride of the Mistress of the Seas.
Up, Jack Tars, and save us,
The whole world shall not brave us,
Up and save the pride of the Mistress of the Seas."

The eleemosynary success that attended Mr. Kipling's song "The Absent-Minded Beggar," with Sir Arthur Sullivan's setting, proves that these artists have more exactly gauged the mind of the lower middle class, while the class below this again has responded with heart and voice to "Tommy Atkins" and the "Soldiers of the Queen."

It may be said at once that, regarded as a recruiting agency, these and other songs of the same kind have been remarkably successful; and critics have no more right to be fastidious about the delicacy of the praise heaped in them upon our soldiers and sailors than they have to insist that the recruiting sergeants shall talk the King's English. Any song should be welcomed which celebrates the soldier's life as an honourable and desirable calling. "Tommy Atkins" is written with spirit and with a certain humour, in the main borrowed from Mr. Kipling; the other is pitifully feeble in expression, and in the chorus becomes almost unintelligible, as the following specimen will show:—

"Britain once did loyally declaim
About the way we ruled the waves;
Ev'ry Briton's song was just the same
When singing of our soldier braves.

All the world had heard it, wonder'd why we sang,
And some have learn'd the reason why—
But we're forgetting it, and we're letting it
Fade away and gradually die.
So when we say that England's master,
Remember who has made her so—

(*Chorus*) It's the soldiers of the Queen
Who've been, my lads, who're seen, my lads,
In the fight for England's glory, lads,
When we've had to show them what we mean:
And when we say we've always won,
And when they ask us how it's done,
We'll proudly point to ev'ry one
Of England's soldiers of the Queen."

Still, feeble as this is, the only deposit it is likely to leave in the minds of the rising generation is a sense of pride in the prowess of the British soldier. Equally entitled to our toleration are the songs which celebrate the national standard; though one might wish they showed occasionally some respect for the limits within which personification is legitimate and metaphors may be successfully mixed. The "it" in the following lines stands for the "shot-riddled flag" of England:—

"To the exile and outcast its shelter extends,
'Neath its mantle the weak have no dread,
And a hand to the alien helpless it lends;
Over all its protection is shed.
'Tis of heroes the cliff-guarded cradle renown'd,
'Tis the birthplace of bard and of sage;
And the names of its worthies immortal are found
On Fame's star-spangled glorious page.

"For the last thousand years it hath shone like a star,
In the history dark of the world,
It hath won countless triumphs in peace and in war,
When the old flag's been ever unfurl'd;
Of all progress it rides, in its pride, in the van,
'Tis the mother of nations unborn,
And its motto will be, 'Equal rights unto man,
And of tyranny hatred and scorn.'"

In another song the flag is characterised as—

"The flag that's gaily waving o'er Scotia's canny heights,
The flag that truly wants to see poor Erin get her rights,
The flag that's fluttered in the breeze on many a gory field,
The flag that's waved our heroes who have died before they'd yield."

Again everybody must welcome the attempt to interest the people in the great deeds of their ancestors; though here also one could wish that the zeal were more according to recent research. In the following verse, for example, we find deeds of valour chronicled that are not recognised in the latest text-books :—

"In Kent when Romans tried to seize old John Bull's honest soil,
We didn't let great Cæsar get the best of all the spoil;
We thrash'd the Danes, and Saxons too, and history can brag
That Britons did their best to hold John Bull's untarnished flag."

Where, on the other hand, the influence of many of these songs seems likely to be pernicious is, first of all, in their advocacy of land-grabbing without right or reason, and secondly, though

perhaps in a less degree, in their stupid self-satisfaction and contempt of foreigners.

The vulgarity and ignorance that disfigures so many of these patriotic effusions must be attributed to the elementary education of the last thirty years, which has given to crowds of people a certain capacity for self-expression without ideas to express, and an interest in reading without the taste to discriminate good from bad. The cure, of course, is not to be found in a withdrawal from the policy of universal education, but in the improvement of the education given; in teaching things that really profit to know; not least, perhaps, in putting before the young people better models of the heroic in literature. A taste that had learned to appreciate the "Ballad of Agincourt" or the "Ballad of the *Revenge*" would of itself turn from such balderdash. Further, it should be possible to give in the upper forms of elementary schools some simple training in the meaning of citizenship, both national and imperial. The knowledge that comes to boys of the upper classes by the way, in conversations at home, never comes at all to their less favoured fellows unless it is expressly communicated; and it is not beneath the care of a great people to see that its sons should receive that groundwork of knowledge which would enable them to take an intelligent interest in the questions of policy which

they will one day help to decide, instead of shouting—to quote one more of these slovenly and degrading compositions—

"What a dear old land to fight for,
What a grand old nation still,
When you read your hist'ry,
Don't it make your heart's blood thrill?
We don't know if the quarrel's right or wrong,
And, hang it, we don't care;
We only know there's going to be a fight,
And Englishmen must be there."

SHAKESPEARE

SHAKESPEARE

I

THE LIFE

"Others abide our question: thou art free.
We ask and ask."

—ARNOLD.

IT is strange to remember, in these days of multiplied biographies, most of them stretching to two volumes, how little curious our ancestors were about the private lives of the men whom they delighted to honour. Shakespeare died in 1616. His first biography was given to the world nearly a century later (1709), by Nicholas Rowe, and of the ten facts which it contains, eight, according to Edmund Malone, who wrote just a century later still, are incorrect. Malone, who was the most learned, and also the sanest, of Shakespearian commentators, was also the first person to take the scientific view of a biography. He begins his account by drawing up a list of

all the people in the seventeenth century who might have written Shakespeare's life and failed to take advantage of their opportunity, persons like Dugdale and Fuller, who were content with a perfunctory half-dozen lines, when all the time Shakespeare's own daughter Judith was alive and waiting to be questioned. She survived until 1662. Then he gives a list of all the persons whom Rowe might have consulted and failed to consult, persons in the second line of tradition, but still trustworthy evidence. And then he passes to what he himself had been able to gather, no longer, alas, from the living voice, but by researches among official papers in Warwickshire and Worcester, the Public Record Office, and other places. I am proposing on this occasion to review what facts of any importance have been thus gleaned from the rubbish-heap of time, whether by Malone himself or his indefatigable successor, Halliwell-Phillips, partly for their own interest, as showing what were the outward conditions under which so rare a genius was bred and flourished, but still more for any light they may throw upon the character of the great poet himself.

Let me begin by a word upon his name. It has parallels in Shakelaunce, and Shakeshaft, and one or two more; and we may learn that to *shake* a spear meant simply to "wield" it, from

such a passage as this in Spenser's "Faerie Queene" (ii. 8, 14):

> "Gold all is not that doth golden seem,
> Ne all good knights that shake well spear and shield."

We may take it, then, that Shakespeare's remote ancestor was a warrior, though not of course a knight; for in the thirteenth century, when such surnames first came into use, and for some centuries after, the name of Shakespeare was exceedingly common, so common, indeed, that an Oxford student who had inherited the name before it became famous, changed it to Saunders, *quod vile reputatum.*

The ancestors of William Shakespeare are believed to have been substantial yeomen for some generations, but they come but dimly into the light of records till the poet's father migrated to Stratford from the neighbouring village of Snitterfield, where his father Richard had land, and then at once we learn something about him. He is summoned on April 29, 1552, with two other residents in Henley Street, Adrian Quiney and Humphry Reynolds, "for making a heap of refuse in the street, against the order of the court," and is fined 12*d.* Four years later he has gained enough substance to buy two houses (one, the present Museum in Henley Street), and then he marries a local heiress, and at once

becomes a person of importance in the commonwealth; passing through all the grades of civic office, burgess, constable, affeeror, chamberlain, alderman, at this point becoming *Master* Shakespeare, till, in 1568, he attains the supreme honours of the borough by being elected high-bailiff. The lady he had married was the daughter of a wealthy farmer of Wilmcote, who was the owner of his father's farm at Snitterfield; she bore the pleasant name of Mary Arden, and was (or was said to be) of some kin with those great Warwickshire people—Roman Catholics and Recusants—the Ardens of Park Hall, and she brought her husband, besides ready money, a house and sixty acres of land called Asbies,[1] and some other property at Snitterfield.

After losing two children, John and Mary Shakespeare had a boy born to them at the end of April 1564, whom they christened William, and he, having escaped the plague that year, which carried off a sixth of the population of Stratford, *non sine dis animosus infans*, would have

[1] We hear a good deal, by and by, about this estate of Asbies. John Shakespeare mortgaged it in 1578 to his brother-in-law, Edmund Lambert, and ten years later, when he parted with the Snitterfield property to raise money for its recovery, he was told he must not only repay the loan but clear all other debts; and this he was not able to do. Nine years later, when William Shakespeare had become prosperous, a suit was instituted for its recovery; but there is no record of any decree, and the property did not come back to the Shakespeares.

been four years old when his father was chief magistrate, and so grew into boyhood as the son of one of the most considerable men in the borough. The question has been much canvassed as to his father's business; and as the discussion about it is characteristic of the process by which the facts of Shakespeare's life have been ascertained, I may be allowed to illustrate that process by this one instance.

Aubrey, the gossiping antiquary, writing in 1680, had mentioned the tradition that Shakespeare's father was a butcher, and that the son, as a boy, exercised his father's trade; adding that "when he killed a calf he would do it in a high style and make a speech." Rowe, in his "Life," states that he was informed from oral tradition that John Shakespeare was a woolman, and all sensitive people in the eighteenth century were immensely relieved at finding that Shakespeare's father, and presumably Shakespeare himself, had dealt with the outside rather than the inside of the sheep's carcase. Then Malone set out on his researches and discovered from the Stratford records that John Shakespeare is referred to as a glover, and he pointed a polite finger both at Aubrey and at Rowe. Finally Mr. Halliwell-Phillips comes along, and produces from a Stratford manuscript particulars of two glovers *who used other trades;* one of them, a certain George

Perry, who, "besides his glover's trade, useth buying and selling of wool." So we have the woolman and the glover reconciled; and very reasonably, for the gloves most in use at Stratford would have been thick sheepskin gloves. But no instance has been discovered of the same man being both glover and butcher: and as glovers were frequently tanners, and tanners by statute were prohibited from being butchers, it is almost certain that the tradition that Shakespeare's father was a butcher must be discredited, especially as he is officially described as a glover on two occasions thirty years apart. He is sometimes described simply as a yeoman, and we know from the Stratford records that he trafficked in the produce of his farms, selling at one time timber, at another corn, at another wool.

But whatever may have been John Shakespeare's business or businesses, the important fact for us is that, whereas for twenty years and more he succeeded, by and by he failed. The late Professor Baynes, who wrote the Life of Shakespeare in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," discoved in him the sign of "a sanguine unheedful temper" in his neglect to remove that heap of refuse in Henley Street. But such unheedfulness was the rule in Stratford. Six years later John Shakespeare is fined for "not keeping his gutter clean," along with four other residents, one of

them Master Bailiff himself; and there is good evidence that it was William Shakespeare's indifference in such matters to which he owed the fever from which he died. Mr. Baynes is, perhaps, more plausible in his conjecture that John Shakespeare was of a social and pleasure-loving nature (and so inclined to be lavish of his means), from the fact that it was during his year as bailiff, and presumably by his invitation, that for the first time Stratford was visited by companies of players. I mention these details about the father because it is important for us to realise in what sort of social surroundings the son grew to manhood. To call Shakespeare, as is sometimes done, "the son of a Warwickshire peasant," gives no idea of the true facts about his breeding. To begin with, he would never have known, as too many peasants at all times have known, the demoralising pinch of hunger; at his worst straits for money his father was never driven to sell his house property in Stratford; he would never have known either the still more demoralising cringing before his so-called betters, which is so often in the blood of the peasant class, the heirs of the old serfs: for traders, in the provinces as much as in London, were accustomed to hold their heads high, because they managed their own affairs. Then again, although it is probable that neither of Shakespeare's parents could write, it does not

follow that they could not read; at any rate they would see the best society there was in the little market-town. And, if we remember that the poet's mother prided herself on being a gentlewoman by family, although brought up as a yeoman's daughter (and no persons are so careful of gentle traditions as those who are a little better born than those among whom their lot is cast), we may guess that Shakespeare's home was not an ill nursery for one who was presently to stand before kings, and—what is of more consequence—was to hold up to the English people the highest ideal of womanhood ever presented to them by any of their great writers.

At seven years old William would have been sent to the Free Grammar School of Stratford—where the curriculum was that of the other schools of the period: Lily's Latin Grammar and a book of Latin dialogues to start with; then the Distichs of Dionysius Cato, and Æsop's Fables; then in the fourth year some easy passages of Cicero, and parts of Ovid's "Metamorphoses," and, not least, the very popular eclogues of a Renaissance scholar, John Baptist Mantuanus. If he remained longer at school, and was preparing for the University, he would proceed to Virgil, Horace, Terence, or whatever Latin classical writer his master especially affected.

It is perfectly evident from Shakespeare's plays

that their writer had gone through this regular Grammar School course. "The Merry Wives of Windsor" furnishes us with a charming picture of the first-form boy being catechised in Lily's Accidence; and for an example of the colloquial Latin which the Grammar School taught, it is enough to refer to the conversation of Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel in "Love's Labour's Lost," where the schoolmaster interlards his remarks with scrappy sentences out of the phrase book, like *Satis quod sufficit; Novi hominem tanquam te:* while the parson, not being in such good practice, and endeavouring to emulate him, trips and falls. Holofernes also quotes the first line from Mantuanus's eclogues: "Fauste, precor gelida quando pecus omne sub umbra Ruminat," and exclaims: "Ah, good old Mantuan, I may speak of thee as the traveller doth of Venice: Old Mantuan, Old Mantuan! who understandeth thee not, loves thee not."

I need not stay to point out the many references in Shakespeare's plays to the writings of Ovid—but when persons wish to reduce the "small Latin" that Ben Jonson allowed his friend Shakespeare to nothing at all, it is worth while to remember that the motto from Ovid which Shakespeare prefixed to the "Venus and Adonis" was from a poem of which at the time there was no published translation in English.

It is interesting also to remember that one of the few books which contain what may be a genuine autograph of Shakespeare is an Aldine copy of Ovid's "Metamorphoses." It is in the Bodleian Library, and passed the eye of Mr. Coxe, who was perhaps the most acute detector of forgeries who ever presided over a library. On the other hand (and in view of recent controversies this may be the more important consideration), that Shakespeare's classical knowledge was not that of a first-rate scholar like Ben Jonson or Francis Bacon, any one may see for himself who will take up the Roman plays; the marvellous success of those plays in reproducing the ancient Roman spirit is due entirely to the vigour of the poet's imagination, working upon the material supplied in Plutarch's Lives, which he read in Sir Thomas North's translation. But where North blunders, Shakespeare blunders; he made no attempt to go behind his crib, and he blunders where North does not blunder, through ignorance of Roman constitutional history, confusing the functions of tribune and prætor.[1] If any one is tempted to think that it is classical

[1] Plutarch says that a Roman general standing for the consulship used to appear in the Forum with his toga only, without the tunic beneath it, so as to display his scars more readily. Amyot used the phrase "une robe simple." North, who translated from Amyot, mistook the sense of "simple," and rendered the phrase by "a poor gown." Shakespeare paraphrased this into the "napless vesture of humility."

knowledge, and not imagination, that is responsible for the success of Shakespeare's Roman plays, let him turn to Ben Jonson's "Sejanus" and "Catiline," every line, almost, of which is supported by references to authorities, and then consult the verdict of the playgoers of the period; here is one by an Oxford scholar, Leonard Digges:

> "So have I seene when Cæsar would appeare—
> And on the stage at half-sword parley were
> Brutus and Cassius—oh how the audience
> Were ravish'd! with what wonder they went thence;
> When some new day they would not brooke a line
> Of tedious (though well labour'd) Catiline;
> Sejanus too was irksome."

Of Shakespeare's education outside the walls of the Stratford Grammar School, every one's imagination will furnish him with a better account than I can pretend to give. We have only to think of "As You Like It" or "A Winter's Tale." The "Forest of Ardennes," in which the Rosalind and Celia of Lodge's story wandered, has become in the play the "Forest of Arden," and of this Warwickshire forest Shakespeare knew every glade and alley before he painted his recollection of it in his play. We are also quite sure that he must have enjoyed the humours of many a sheep-shearing festival before he condensed their spirit so perfectly into the country scenes of "A Winter's Tale."

We must not forget either that on his holidays the boy would have opportunities of making acquaintance (from the outside) with what (from the inside) he was to come to know as his own profession. Every Corpus Christi at Coventry (only thirteen miles from Stratford) there was performed a cycle of miracle plays; and when Hamlet speaks of "outdoing Termagant," and "out-Heroding Herod," and when Bottom speaks of acting in a "Cain-coloured" beard, and Celia calls Orlando's hair "something browner than Judas's," we know that the playwright is reminding the audience of what he and they remembered in their young days of the actors in such pageants. But the year 1569, when Shakespeare was only five years old, saw the introduction into Stratford of actors of another type, a professional company, the Queen's own players from London, who had come by leave of Mr. Bailiff Shakespeare, and opened their visit by a free performance before the council.

What, one wonders, were the plays which on this first occasion they brought with them? We know that in this very year a small boy at Gloucester, named Willis, of the same age as Shakespeare, had witnessed, as he stood between his father's knees, a morality called the "Cradle of Security," which he describes; did the five-year-old Shakespeare in the same way peep

through his father's knees at the players; and, if so, what was the play? Was it a morality of the same old-fashioned type—or was it, perhaps, the fire-new drama written by the Master of Trinity Hall, Thomas Preston, then being acted in town, "The Lamentable Tragedy, mixed full of pleasant mirth, conteyning the Life of Cambises, King of Persia"? Falstaff, at any rate, knew what it meant to "speak in passion, in King Cambyses' vein"; or was it again "The Tragical Comedy of Apius and Virginia," written by one R. B., parts of which seem to have suggested "that tedious brief scene of young Pyramus and his love Thisbe — very tragical mirth," which Peter Quince and his fellows presented before the Duke of Athens. Was this the sort of thing young Shakespeare heard?—

"(*Enter* JUDGE APIUS.)

"The Furies fell of Limbo lake
My princely days do short;
All drowned in deadly ways I live,
That once did joy in sport.
O Gods above that rule the skies,
Ye babes that brag in bliss,
Ye goddesses, ye graces, you,
What burning brunt is this?
Bend down your ire, destroy me quick,
Or else to grant me grace,
No more but that my burning breast
Virginia may embrace."

We can imagine the learned Judge continuing in the very words of Pyramus:—

"But stay;—O spite!
But mark;—Poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here?
Eyes, do you see?
How can it be?
O dainty duck! O dear!

"Thy mantle good,
What, stain'd with blood?
Approach, ye furies fell!
O fates! come, come;
Cut thread and thrum;
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!"

Shakespeare in after days could afford to laugh good-naturedly at Cambyses and Judge Apius, no less than at Termagant and Herod; but we cannot exaggerate the probable influence on his imagination of his first introduction to the Renaissance drama, whether it came then or a few years later. Here was a new world of thought and passion, brought vividly before his eyes by these players; one had but to sit still, and the whole cycle of the world's inner history, its joys and sorrows, wrongs and revenges, could pass before his eyes, as in Friar Bacon's magic glass. If youth can still be stage-struck, when the stage is a commonplace of our civilisation, we need not doubt that the visits of these first travelling companies, when acting was a new art, brought to

the imaginative soul of the youthful Shakespeare dreams and hopes that by and by moulded his life.

Just one thing more about this topic of Shakespeare's education. What did he read at home? One of those wiseacres who think that Shakespeare's plays were written by James I.'s philosophical Lord Chancellor, Francis Bacon, has pointed out to us that Shakespeare in his will says nothing about his library—a remark that, it may be useful to remember, applies no less to the "judicious Hooker," who probably possessed some books all the same. Mr. Halliwell-Phillips takes a gloomy view of the amount of literature to be found within the houses at Stratford. "Exclusive of Bibles, Church Services, Psalters and Education manuals," he writes, "there were certainly not more than two or three dozen books, if so many, in the whole town." Even so one may hazard a guess that what books there were found their way to Henley Street; and why should not books have found their way down from London? We may be sure that Tottell's "Book of Songs and Sonnets," first published in 1557, of which eight editions were issued in thirty years, was known in the district; for did not Master Slender of Gloucestershire possess a copy? And when Shakespeare was fifteen, his school friend Richard Field, who by and by

published the "Venus and Adonis," left Stratford and his father's tanyard, to be bound apprentice to a London printer, and Field's brother and two other Stratford boys were apprenticed to London printers a few years later or earlier,[1] which of itself proves that the art of printing was recognised in the little community of Stratford; and I for one choose to believe that young Richard Field would have sent down to his friend at Stratford any books he could get hold of, and certainly a book which at the end of that same year made a great stir — the "Shepheard's Calendar," by Edmund Spenser.

We learn from Rowe, who had the information from Betterton the actor, who is supposed to have gone to Stratford in 1708 to collect intelligence, that "the narrowness of his father's circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home, forced him to withdraw his son from school." He does not say when; and he adds that "upon his leaving school he seems to have given entirely into that way of living which his father proposed to him," which is what might be expected in a good son, but does not help us to determine his calling. Aubrey tells us that he exercised his father's trade, which may have been so, especially as his marriage at eighteen would seem to prove that he was not

[1] See Introduction to *Venus and Adonis* fac-simile by Sidney Lee, p. 39.

apprenticed to a very strict master; for apprentices who married before they were out of their articles lost their freedom. There is a further tradition which Aubrey received from Beeston the actor, who would have had it in a direct line, not from gossiping townsfolk, but from the poet himself; and I give it in Aubrey's own words: "Though as Ben Jonson says of him that he had but little Latin and less Greek, he understood Latin pretty well, for he had been in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country." A youth of proved abilities, with a known taste for letters, might well have been employed as usher at the Grammar School when his father's business failed.

We must pass now to speak of that very critical event in the life of the poet, his marriage, and his subsequent departure from Stratford. I will give as shortly as possible the ascertained facts. In the Registry of the diocese of Worcester there is a *bond* dated November 28, 1582, for the issue of a licence for the marriage of William Shakespeare and Ann Hathwey,[1] with once asking of

[1] The late Mr. C. J. Elton's attempt to prove that this Anne was not the daughter of Richard Hathaway of Shottery fills me with amazement. On the one side are the facts (1) that the persons who applied for Anne's marriage licence also attested Richard's will, (2) that Richard's shepherd lent Mrs. Shakespeare money. "These," says Mr. Elton, "are only subsidiary details." All he has to urge on the other side is that in Richard Hathaway's will his daughter is called Agnes, and that "as early as the thirty-third of Henry VI. it was decided that Anne and Agnes are distinct baptismal names

the banns, such a bond (to indemnify the bishop from any action arising out of the granting of the licence) being the usual way of assuring the authorities that there was no canonical impediment to the marriage and that the necessary consents had been obtained. On the previous day a licence was issued to a William Shakespeare to marry Ann Whately, of Temple Grafton. There seems here, at first sight, the outline of a romance. Imagination conjures up the figure of young William galloping off to Worcester "post-haste for a licence," as Mr. Jingle says, to marry one lady, and the friends of another, with whom presumably there was a pre-contract, pursuing him, and binding him down to marry with only one week's grace. But the romance will not bear investigation. The licence and the bond must refer to the same marriage, or else you have a bond without a licence, and a licence without a bond, and that the bond in the one case should be lost and the licence not be entered in the other is exceedingly improbable.[1] More-

and not convertible." To which the layman cannot but reply that there would have been no need to decide the point if the names had not been convertible by ordinary custom. Mr. Halliwell-Phillips has collected instances (ii. 185). Thus: "Thomas Greene and Agnes his wife," in a birth register of 1602, are referred to three years later as "Thomas Greene and Anne his wife."

[1] See "Shakespeare's Marriage," by J. W. Gray. Mr. Gray has been at the pains to go through the Bishop's Registers at Worcester, and has found other cases of blunder between the surname on the licence and that on the bond.

over, there is no power even in a bishop's licence to compel a freeborn Englishman to marry against his will; particularly when he is a minor, and an apprentice. The need to obtain a licence at all arose from the fact that only by licence could marriages be solemnised at certain seasons of the year; one such close time extended from Advent to the octave of Epiphany. When therefore a licence was applied for on November 27, three days before Advent, it looks as if something had happened which would make it impossible to wait until January 13; and this might be the fact that Shakespeare had to leave Stratford in haste; and a recent writer on the subject, Mr. J. W. Gray, finds the need for haste in the traditional act of poaching which inflamed against him the wrath of Sir Thomas Lucy.

The objection to that theory is that if we send Shakespeare away from Stratford in November 1582, we must bring him back again, because, although his eldest daughter Susanna was born at the end of May following, the twins Hamnet and Judith were not born until February 1585; and if Shakespeare was safe in returning home, it is hard to see why there was need for so precipitate a flight. Of course, we may consider that the threatened storm blew over, that it was a first offence, and that Sir Thomas Lucy proved tractable. Another suggestion recently

made[1] is that Anne Hathaway's father, whose will was proved in July of this year, having bequeathed his daughter the sum of £6, 3s. 4d. to be paid her *on the day of her marriage*, the prospect of such a marriage portion induced the happy pair to precipitate matters with the consent of the bride's friends as soon as the money was forthcoming. For it is significant that the two sureties to the marriage bond are two farmers of Shottery, Fulk Sandells and John Richardson, one of whom was a witness to Richard Hathaway's will, and the other its "supervisor." This, I confess, appears to me to be the only plausible explanation yet offered for the hasty wedding. I do not think that the regularising of the union into which Shakespeare had entered with Anne Hathaway furnishes a sufficient motive for the extreme haste of the proceeding.

That the departure for London, whenever it did occur, was caused by the action of Sir Thomas Lucy, admits of no doubt. We have the tradition of it which Betterton found at Stratford, and we have an earlier reference to the tradition in the account of a Gloucestershire archdeacon of the seventeenth century named Davies, who describes Shakespeare as "much given to all unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits, particularly from

[1] See letter from Mr. T. Le Marchant Douse, in *Times* (supplement), April 21, 1905.

Sir-Lucy, who had him whipt, and at last made him fly his native country to his great advancement. But his revenge," continues the archdeacon, "was so great that he is his Justice Clodpate [he means Shallow], and calls him a great man, and that (in allusion to his name) bore three louses rampant for his arms."

I need but recall to your recollection the famous scene at the opening of "The Merry Wives of Windsor," where Justice Shallow enters in a great fury of indignation against Falstaff for breaking his park and stealing the deer, thereby abusing in his person a very ancient family whose members for three hundred years had signed themselves "armigero," and "borne the dozen white luces in their coat." Upon which the kindly Welsh parson Sir Hugh Evans, misunderstanding the kind of luces referred to—for a luce was the fish generally called a pike—and also mistaking the nature of the "coat" on which they figured, remarks:

"The dozen white louses do become an old coat well."

Now the pun in itself is so poor that it is inconceivable Shakespeare introduced it for its own sake; and when we know that no other family but that of Sir Thomas Lucy bore this charge of the luce, and they bore it in reference to their name, it is put beyond doubt that Shake-

speare intended a personal affront; while by substituting twelve luces for three, which was the number on the Lucy coat, he kept on the windy side of the Star Chamber. We cannot pretend to judge Shakespeare in this matter, because we do not know the extent of the provocation he had received. Tradition says he was "whipt." Speaking for myself, I cannot be sorry that his resentment took this shape, because it has supplied me, times without number, with an unanswerable question to put to those persons who tell one that Shakespeare's plays were written by Bacon: viz. How Bacon, who was a friend and correspondent of Sir Thomas Lucy's, can be conceived making this unprovoked and very ungentlemanlike jest upon another gentleman's coat of arms? Shakespeare at the date of the "Merry Wives of Windsor" was not yet "a gentleman born." I need not spend time in endeavouring to show that this boyish escapade among Sir Thomas Lucy's deer did not permanently ruin Shakespeare's character. It would be a poor compliment to Shakespeare to condone a breach of the eighth commandment. But simple justice requires me to explain that at this period deer-stealing was looked upon among respectable people with even greater tolerance than smuggling two centuries later. It was not in the least blackguardly, as poaching is to-day. It was a very favourite pastime, for instance, with Oxford

undergraduates, who then as now might stand as the pattern of good form. We find it chronicled without special comment along with fencing, dancing, and hunting the hare, among the youthful sports of a certain Bishop of Worcester. And there was a proverb of the day, that "venison is nothing so sweet as when it is stolen." As to the date of the incident we have no information. A probable date seems to be offered about February 1585 when the twins were christened, for Shakespeare had no more children; and it may be significant that in March of that year Sir Thomas Lucy was in charge of a Bill in the House of Commons for the *preservation of game*. If Shakespeare did not find employment at a London theatre in 1585, he must have waited till 1587, for in 1586 the theatres were closed on account of the Plague.

Here, then, Shakespeare's youth ends. For seven years after 1585 he disappears from sight, lost in London; when he emerges it is as a leading actor and playwright. How he spent the interval is mere matter of conjecture; but tradition asserts that he joined the theatre in the very lowest rank, that of "servitor," and so worked his way up. One tradition says that he began *outside* the theatre by holding the horses of the gallants who rode to the play, before he even worked his way in. However that may

be, and the tradition implies the knowledge of a very short-lived practice, that of riding to the play, it was undoubtedly to the long apprenticeship which Shakespeare served, as call-boy, and prompter's assistant, making him conversant with the stage in all its arrangements, that he owed no small part of the mastery which he was by and by to display as a dramatist. In the first place, he gained that skill in stage-craft—the arrangement of exits and entrances and so forth—which only experience can give; and which makes such plays as the "Comedy of Errors," or such scenes as the forest scene in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," although they are most confusing to read, quite simple and straightforward on the stage. In the second place, he learned how to develop a plot in a thoroughly dramatic fashion, and with the least possible waste of time and energy. It must have struck everybody, for example, how well Shakespeare's plays open; how attention is at once caught and held; and the main action begins without delay. Thirdly, he gained the eye of a stage manager for effective "business." Take, for an example, the play of "Macbeth." Shakespeare the poet could have given us the wonderful speeches in which he turns the old chronicle into tragedy, but it was the eye of the trained actor and stage-manager which gave

us the witch scenes, the air-drawn dagger, the blood-stained hands that seemed to pluck at Macbeth's eyes, the knocking at the gate, the sleep-walking—points which still tell upon the audience, as they did when it was first put upon the stage. And not only did these seven years advance Shakespeare in the knowledge of his profession, they advanced him also in general culture. We know that a "poet is born and not made"; but Ben Jonson reminds us that "a good poet's made as well as born"; and he is made by study of the world past and present, by men and books. Mr. Sidney Lee has just told us that Shakespeare had read some of the Italian poets of the Renaissance, before he wrote his "Venus and Adonis"; and if he was at the pains to master Italian, we may be sure that he read whatever he found worth reading in his own tongue. Of still greater consequence was his commerce in the world of London with men of all sorts and conditions. And so when a certain class of our friends, to whom I have already referred, ask us how we think it possible that a young man from the Midlands on coming up to town could produce, perhaps as his very first play, a piece so free from everything provincial, and so full of character and wit and courtly manners, as "Love's Labour's Lost," we may at least reply, without raising the difficult

point of genius, that seven years in London at the impressionable age of twenty-one can work great changes in a man's experience of life even to-day.

When we first meet Shakespeare's name as a player—in any formal fashion—it is in a very important document, the accounts of the Queen's Treasurer of the Chamber, and in the best company :—

"To William Kempe, William Shakespeare, and Richard Burbage, servaunts to the Ld. Chamberlain, upon the councils warrant, dated at Whitehall 15 March 1594, for 2 several comedies or interludes shewed by them before her majesty in Christmas time last past, viz. upon S. Stephens day and Innocents day—£13 6 8 and by way of her majesty's reward £6 13 4 in all £20."

Now see what this means: Kemp was the greatest comedian, and Burbage the greatest tragedian, of his time, and here is Shakespeare standing between them, like Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy in Sir Joshua Reynolds' celebrated picture, a third with the two heads of his profession. After that indisputable evidence to the rank he held in his company there is hardly need to go in search of other testimony that he was a competent actor ; but as it might perhaps be held that Shakespeare's position in the company was due chiefly to the fact that he was its playwright, it may be well to note that,

two years before this, Chettle the dramatist refers to Shakespeare in a pamphlet as "*excellent* in the quality he professes," and Aubrey preserves the opinion of an old actor, William Beeston, who was the son of an apprentice of Augustine Phillips, one of Shakespeare's own friends and colleagues, that he acted "exceedingly well," and contrasts him on that point with Ben Jonson, who, according to the same authority, "was never a good actor though a good trainer." It is noticeable, too, that we find Shakespeare's name standing first on the list of actors who performed Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour," a play which his good nature is said to have saved from refusal by his company. By the side of such testimony we need not attach importance to the exact form of the tradition preserved by Rowe that "the *top* of his performance was the Ghost in his own Hamlet," though he may very well have played the part, as Garrick did after him. The only other stage tradition we have is that he was accustomed to play "kingly parts."

If Shakespeare then became an actor and reached the top of his "quality" after working his way through the stages of call-boy and supernumerary, we know for a certainty that when he became a dramatist, he reached the top of that profession, from beginnings as little dignified. When he came to London the leading dramatists

were a set of young men, most of them from the universities, who were in the act of revolutionising the stage—it would be as true to say, creating it. The eldest was John Lyly, who wrote comedies chiefly in prose; then there was Thomas Kyd—"sporting Kyd," as Ben Jonson calls him with an ironic play upon his name—who wrote tragedies of a bloodthirsty type, among them a tragedy of "Hamlet," which Shakespeare was afterwards to re-write; George Peele, who wrote tragedies, comedies, and historical plays; Robert Greene, who also wrote everything, but notably one very charming comedy of country life with the queer title of "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay," and, above all, there was Christopher Marlowe. Now if we turn to that invaluable document the Diary of Henslowe, the theatre proprietor, for the year 1592, we find in his cash account such entries as the following:[1]

			£	s.	d.	
19 Feb. 159½	Recd. at	Friar Bacon		17	3	[Greene's play.
20 ,,	,,	Mulomurco [*i.e.* Muley Mulocco]		29	0	[Peele's "Battle of Alcazar."
21 ,,	,,	Orlando		16	6	[An early play of Greene's.
23 ,,	,,	Spanish Comedy [Don Horatio]		13	6	[A fore piece to Kyd's "Spanish Tragedy."
26 ,,	,,	Jew of Malta		50	0	[Marlowe's play.
29 ,,	,,	Mulamulloco		34	0	
3 March	,,	Harry the 6th	3	16	8	

[1] See W. W. Greg's edition, p. 15.

What is the meaning of this sudden rise in the takings at the theatre? An explanation is to be found in a remark of the pamphleteer Thomas Nash, who in a piece called "Pierce Penniless," licensed in August of that year, writes:

> "How would it have joyed brave Talbot (the terror of the French) to thinke that after he had lain 200 years in his tomb, he should triumph again on the stage, and have his bones new embalmed with the tears of ten thousand spectators at least (at several times) who, in the tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding."

Now, whoever wrote the original draft of the "First Part of King Henry VI.," certainly the Talbot scenes were added or re-written by Shakespeare, and it was these scenes that, according to Nash, made the success of the piece. A second and third part of "Henry VI." in the course of the same year, were, in the same way, but to a far greater extent, re-written by this young actor, and their success we can gauge, not this time from a shout of praise, but from a scream of rage sent up by the poor dramatist whose work had thus been worked over. (It has always to be borne in mind in discussing the Elizabethan drama that plays were sold out and out by the dramatists to one or other company of actors; so that it was in the power of the company, and a very usual custom, to have the plays, when they

got a little worn by use, freshened, either by the author or by a new hand.) In this autumn of 1592 the dramatist Greene lay a-dying, and from his deathbed he made a solemn address to his fellows, Marlowe, Peele, and others, to forsake their vicious courses—they were all notoriously wild—and to live repentant lives before it was too late. And he concludes his appeal with a rather vague sentence, the general sense of which seems to be, that if they find themselves in want, they must not look to the players for help. The players, it must be understood, occupied something of the same position in regard to the dramatist as a modern publisher does to his author. The publisher is more likely to be a capitalist than the author. Alleyn, the founder of Dulwich College, Burbage, Hemings, Cundell, Shakespeare himself, made fortunes on the stage, while Greene, and Marlowe, and Drayton, and many other dramatists were put to shifts to make a bare living.

"Base-minded men, all three of you [says Greene], if by my misery ye be not warned; for unto none of you, like me, sought those burs to cleave; those puppets, I mean, that speak from our mouths; those anticks garnished in our colours. Trust them not, for there is an *upstart crow* beautified with our feathers, that with his 'tiger's heart wrapt in a player's hide,' supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse [*i.e.* to stuff it out with epithets]

as the best of you; and being an absolute Johannes Factotum, is, in his own conceit, the only Shake-scene in a country."

If we can suppose Sir Charles Wyndham and Mr. Tree taking suddenly to writing plays, and successful plays, or Mr. Murray and Mr. Methuen to writing successful novels, we shall form some idea of the horror that possessed poor Greene's imagination. If players turned playwright, the playwright's occupation was gone; and if, in addition, we remember the contempt in which the players were held by these poor gentlemen —"puppets through whom *we* speak," "anticks garnished in *our* colours," jackdaws dressed up in the feathers of more royal birds, we shall realise the consternation that Shakespeare had inspired in this poor indignant spirit.

We come upon evidence of the same sort of feeling in a university play written somewhat later, where a character, Studioso, complains of the actors that,

> "With mouthing words that better wits had framed
> They purchase lands and now esquires are made,"

and in a scene where Kempe and Burbage are represented as looking about in Cambridge for likely recruits for their company—who at need would write a part as well as act one—Kempe is made to say: "Few of the university pen plays

well; they smell too much of that writer Ovid, and that writer Metamorphosis, and talk too much of Proserpina and Jupiter. Why here's our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down." "Our *fellow* Shakespeare," that is, "our partner." The late Judge Webb, in a book called "The Mystery of William Shakespeare," asserted that no literary man of the day could be "adduced as attesting the responsibility of the *player* for the works which are associated with his name." Well, here is such a statement. If I may say a final word about that remarkable heresy: the two arguments that seem to me conclusive that the Shakespearian plays were not written by a gentleman amateur like Francis Bacon are (1) that the plays display, as I have already pointed out, such wonderful constructive skill, and such knowledge of what is effective on the stage—arts, which can only be learned by long habituation to the theatre —and (2) that so many of the Shakespearian plays are old plays re-written, *e.g.* "Henry IV.," "Henry V.," "King John," "Richard III.," "Merchant of Venice," "Hamlet"; and to re-write an old play is a task no gentleman would have undertaken for his own pleasure, or indeed would have been at liberty to undertake, because the plays were the absolute property of the acting companies.

Shakespeare's growing prosperity is marked in

1596 by an application to Heralds' College for a grant of arms to his father, which, though unsuccessful at the time, succeeded three years later; and in 1597 by the purchase of the Great House at Stratford called "New Place." But his relish of these signs of social advancement must have been sadly dashed by the loss in the former year of his only son, the twelve-year-old Hamnet. Can we at all figure to ourselves Shakespeare's life now that he was rising into fame?

It is difficult to determine how much of the year he spent in Stratford after the purchase of New Place. In 1597 he appears in a list as the third largest owner of corn in his ward, which might suggest that he had already made his home there. On the other hand, there is a curious memorandum made by his cousin, Thomas Greene, dated September 9, 1609, about the delay in repairing a house in Stratford, which he was content to permit "the rather because I perceyved I might stay another yere at New Place," which looks as though Shakespeare could not have been in constant residence. Mr. Halliwell-Phillips points out also that the precepts in an action brought by Shakespeare for the recovery of a debt, on August 17, December 21, 1609, and February 15, March 15, and June 7, 1610, were issued to Greene. So that Shakespeare was apparently away from Stratford on those dates, which cover most of

the year. Biographers, therefore, have come to the conclusion that it was not until 1611, when he ceased writing for the stage, that Shakespeare came permanently to reside at Stratford. Nevertheless I like to think that his visits there were neither short nor infrequent. I see no reason to assume that when Shakespeare became the recognised playwright of his company, he would have been expected to appear on the boards with the regularity of those members who were actors only. Indeed it is inconceivable that he should have been expected to produce two plays a year in the intervals left over from the regular practice of an exacting profession. It may be remembered that Hamlet declared that his adaptation of the play which touched the king's conscience ought to get him a share in a theatrical company. And it is a fair inference that Shakespeare's shares depended upon his plays rather than his acting. As to his residence in London, we must bear in mind that during his period upon the stage the theatre was the height of fashion ; so that, besides making his fortune, an actor and dramatist of recognised genius would have opportunities of making acquaintance with that section of the fashionable world that cared for art and letters. At that epoch we know that the great nobles were even eager to befriend men of genius. The familiar tone of the dedication of "Lucrece" to

Lord Southampton has often been remarked upon. It lends likelihood to the tradition, handed down by Sir William Davenant, that Southampton at one time gave the poet a large sum of money "to enable him to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to." The reference to Essex in one of the choruses of "King Henry V.," which is dragged in by the head and ears, would imply that that nobleman, no less than his friend Southampton, had admitted the poet to his friendship; and the obvious meaning of the "Sonnets" is that an affectionate intimacy had grown up between Shakespeare and some scion of a noble house whose identity cannot now be determined. And then, beside these great people, great in one sense, we know Shakespeare to have been intimate with those who were great in another sense—the men of letters of the day. Fuller, in his "Worthies," has celebrated the wit combats at the Mermaid tavern between Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, comparing the latter to a "Spanish great galleon," solid but slow; the former to an English man-of-war, "lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing." Spenser, who was in England, in 1591, records his meeting with Shakespeare in "Colin Clout's come home again," and Michael Drayton, a Warwickshire man, we know to have been one of his familiars up to the last. But though tradition

links no other literary names than these with Shakespeare's, there can be no doubt that the Mermaid meetings, which owed their beginnings to Sir Walter Raleigh, included all that was distinguished at the time in poetry and the drama.

But while the courtiers were affable in the way that great people always are affable to the men of genius who amuse them, and while Bohemia was friendly, all that was respectable and religious in the city of London was bitterly hostile. All through Elizabeth's reign a battle was waged between the Court and the City as to the toleration of theatres or players at all. If any one supposes that an actor's profession in Shakespeare's day was respected, because it was profitable, he should read the petition of a gentleman called Henry Clifton to the Queen against the Master of the Children of her Chapel for kidnapping his son Thomas, a boy of thirteen. The choirs of the Chapels Royal were recruited in those days, as the navy long continued to be, by impressment. Any boys with good voices from any other choir were liable to be pressed into the service. But when the stage became popular and the various choirs at St. Paul's, Westminster, and the Chapels Royal added acting to their ecclesiastical employment, then, it seems, boys were impressed for the stage who had no singing voices. This little

Tom Clifton was seized upon one morning on his way to Christ's Hospital, and taken to the play-house at Blackfriars, there, in his father's words, "to compell him to exercise the *base* trade of a mercenary interlude player, to his utter loss of time, ruin, and disparagement." The words *base* and *vile* occur again and again in this interesting document, as epithets of the actor's profession; and, coming from a gentleman, they form an apt commentary on certain passages in the "Sonnets," in which Shakespeare contrasts his fortune with that of his young and gentle friend:

> "O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide
> The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
> That did not better for my life provide
> Than public means which public manners breeds.
> Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
> And almost thence my nature is subdued
> To what it works in, like the dyer's hand:
> Pity me, then, and wish I were renew'd."

The bravest of men might be forgiven for wincing now and then when he caught sight of his own trade through the eyes of the public opinion of the day. Whether his fellow-townsmen at Stratford were as contemptuous there is no evidence. It is the fashion to say so, but I hesitate to believe it. The player had made money at any rate, and that the Stratford people were always short of. But it may be guessed that they were proud of him, too; and his father had been somebody

among them. Of course the rising tide of Puritanism visited Stratford as other places. The vicar there was a noted Puritan, and so was Dr. Hall, Shakespeare's son-in-law. The town council in 1602, and again in 1612, prohibited players from acting in the borough, and in 1616 gave the King's own company a gratuity for going away quietly. But I am far from being convinced that the dramatist himself would resent this action of the council. He knew better than they did the scandals that haunted the player's profession, and in the "Sonnets" he speaks of them with intense feeling. Of course, he was not a Puritan, but he would sympathise with the better side of Puritanism, as he saw it in his own daughter and her husband; and when we find from the Chamberlain's accounts of Stratford that a preacher in 1614 was entertained at New Place "with a quart of sack and a quart of claret wine," it is gratuitous to assume with Dr. Brandes that Shakespeare must have been away in London at the time.

As to the details of Shakespeare's life at Stratford we have very few facts, but much has been made of them. In the attempt to throw light upon Shakespeare's character much has been made of his suing his neighbours for small sums. But such litigation, to judge by the records, seems to have been the normal method of carrying on

business at Stratford ; and, at any rate, as these suits were made in the way of business by Shakespeare's attorney on the spot, they cannot be held to shed much light on his personal character. Much, too, has been made of his action in regard to the proposed enclosure of the open fields at Welcombe by William Combe ; but on this point the two most recent biographers take precisely opposite views. Mr. Sidney Lee says : "Having secured himself against all possible loss, Shakespeare threw his influence into Combe's scale ;" on the other hand, Dr. Brandes asserts that Shakespeare "defended the rights of his fellow-citizens against the country gentry." The evidence, happily, can be put very shortly, and every one can form his own opinion upon it. The old system of agriculture being one of common fields in which strips were held by various owners side by side, it was necessary, in order to enclose, that one proprietor should buy out the rest. William Combe, the squire of Welcombe, had for neighbour a Mr. Mannering, steward to Lord Chancellor Ellesmere, who was lord of the manor ; and as, according to Mr. Elton, the Chancellor had that year decreed that enclosure was for the common advantage, Combe had a strong case and strong backing. The corporation of Stratford resisted the proposal. The question for us is, which side did Shakespeare take ? All our evidence

is derived from a MS. book belonging to Shakespeare's cousin, Thomas Greene, who was clerk to the corporation. The following are the pertinent passages, in modern spelling:

"17 *Nov.*—My cousin Shakespeare coming yesterday to town, I went to see him how he did. He told me that they assured him they meant to enclose no further than to Gospel Bush . . . and that they mean in April to survey the land, and then to give satisfaction, and not before; and he and Mr. Hall say they think there will be nothing done at all.

"23 *Dec.*—A hall [*i.e.* council meeting]. Letters written, one to Mr. Manering, another to Mr. Shakespeare, with almost all the Company's hands to either. I also writ of myself to my cousin Shakespeare the copies of all our acts, and then also a note of the inconveniences would happen by the enclosure.

"9 *Jan.*—Mr. Replyngham's [*i.e.* Combe's agent] 28 Oct., article with Mr. Shakespeare [*i.e.* deed of indemnity against loss], and then I was put in by T. Lucas.

"11 *Jan.* 1614.—Mr. Manering and his agreement for me with my cousin Shakespeare.

"*Sept.*—W. Shakspeare telling J. Greene that I was not able to bear the enclosing of Welcombe."

Now what these entries tell us is (1) that Shakespeare did not think Combe meant to press the matter, in face of the opposition of the Stratford people; (2) that in case Combe should do so, he secured himself from loss through the depreciation of the tithes, of which he had purchased

the moiety of a lease ten years previously; (3) that he secured his cousin also, who had a share in the tithes. But so far there is absolutely no ground for saying either that he "threw his influence into Combe's scale," or "defended the rights of his fellow-citizens." The view we shall take of his general attitude will turn upon our interpretation of the last entry quoted above. As it stands it looks a little pointless. Why should Shakespeare tell Thomas Greene's own brother a fact he must have known better than Shakespeare did, and why should Thomas Greene make a solemn entry of Shakespeare's testimony? Here Dr. Ingleby, who facsimiled the MS., comes to our help. He points out that Greene had a trick of writing "I" for "he," sometimes correcting the slip, and sometimes not. On a previous page he had written, "I willed him to learn what *I* could, and I told him so would I," where the second *I* is an obvious slip for *he*. There can be no reasonable doubt, then, that this cryptic entry informs us of Shakespeare's own dislike to the enclosure, and disposes of the statement that he threw his weight into Combe's scale, though it does not justify us in saying that "he defended the rights of his fellow-citizens." He may have done so, but it is dangerous to go beyond the evidence.

The words quoted by Thomas Greene are the last recorded words of the poet. In the April of

the year following he died of a fever in his house at Stratford, after signing a very elaborate will disposing of all his property. There is an interesting clause leaving memorial rings to four friends in Stratford, and three members of his old company, Burbage, Hemings, and Cundell; the last two of whom, seven years later, collected and published his plays. But the clause which has aroused most comment is an interlineation, the only reference to his wife in the document:—

"Item. I give unto my wife my second best bed with the furniture."

Unkind people have thought that Shakespeare meant to be unkind; but Mr. Halliwell-Phillips collected instances of many similar bequests from contemporary wills, one to a wife of "the second best feather bed with a whole furniture there belonging," so that no more ought to be heard of any suggested insult. The reason why Shakespeare chose to make his daughter legatee, rather than his wife, was probably the very simple one that his wife was seven years his senior, and perhaps in poor health; and the reason why he interlined this special gift is probably because she asked for it specially.

In conclusion, I would ask, can we get any clear light on Shakespeare's character from the facts that have been ascertained as to his career?

We have not many formal expressions of opinion by contemporaries about the man himself apart from his works, but we have one or two, and they lay stress on two characteristics, his friendliness and his sense of honour. The very first character we have of him by a contemporary speaks of his "uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty," and also of his "civil demeanour"; and the very last, that of Ben Jonson, says the same: "He was indeed honest and of an open and free nature;" and again in the lines on his portrait: "It was for *gentle* Shakespeare cut." With this agrees the character that is set down in two epigrams by John Davies of Hereford. In 1603, in an epigram on players, he made his compliments especially to Shakespeare and Burbage, as being *gentlemen* in character. It is worth quoting:

"Players, I love ye and your quality,
As ye are men—that pastime not abused;—
W. S., R. B. And some I love for painting, poesy;
And say fell Fortune cannot be excused
That hath for better uses you refused.
Wit, courage, good shape, good parts, and all good
(As long as all these *goods* are no worse used);
And though the stage doth stain pure gentle blood,
Yet *generous* ye are in mind and mood."

And on the word *generous* in the last line he makes the note: "Roscius was said for his

excellency in his quality to be only worthy to come on the stage, and for his *honesty* to be more worthy than to come thereon." To complete the portrait we may add the traits that Aubrey had from Beeston the actor: "He was a handsome, well-shapt man, very good company, and of a very ready and pleasant wit."

Honour, then, in public life, gentleness and companionableness in his private relations—these are the characteristics which men noted in Shakespeare, and they are confirmed by the facts of his career. His "honesty," to use that word in its broad Elizabethan sense, is brought out by two facts which distinguish Shakespeare from many of the contemporary dramatists. The first is that, much as commentators have laboured to find caricatures of his fellow-playwrights among his *dramatis personæ*, they have altogether failed; and while other dramatists seem to have made these attacks a prominent feature of interest in their plays, the only reference made by Shakespeare to any quarrel is the admirably just criticism of Hamlet on the competition between the men and boy actors, that those who encourage it are making the boys fight "against their own succession." The second fact is that Shakespeare chose the life of hard work and thrift instead of the life of dissipation, keeping as a lodestar before him the determination to restore

the fortunes of his father and his family. For this he has been sneered at by Pope, of all people, who, in a familiar couplet, accuses him of winging his flight "for gain." It would be as fair to say that Warren Hastings established our Indian Empire "for gain," because he also kept always before him the resolution to win back the family estate. I do not understand how any accusation can be brought against any man of genius for taking the money value of his work, unless it can be shown that, while careful of his own interests, he is indifferent to those of others. Of this there is no evidence in Shakespeare's case; but, on the contrary, Ben Jonson, who knew him well, and had a shrewd tongue, assures us that he was of "an open and free nature." I submit therefore that the facts of Shakespeare's life show him to us as a good friend and a man of honour.

II

THE CHARACTER OF THE DRAMATIST

THE problem to which we are now to address ourselves is the question whether it is possible from an examination of Shakespeare's writings to arrive at any conclusion as to his personal character and view of life. Let us begin at the bottom with some questions as to his personal tastes and habits. And first, as to drinking. Readers have been struck with one or two passages—one in "Hamlet," [1] one in "Othello," [2] and one in "As You Like It" [3]—censuring the English habit of drinking to excess; passages which have no relevancy to the plot of the play, and seem spoken over the footlights directly to the audience.

> "This heavy-headed revel, east and west,
> Makes us traduced and taxed of other nations."

Now the interest of these passages is considerable taken by themselves, but they become more interesting still in the light of certain local traditions that Shakespeare's convivial habits occasionally led him into intemperance. So that what on the surface looks merely like the voice of Shakespeare's contempt for a silly custom may be interpreted,

[1] i. 4, 17. [2] ii. 3, 78. [3] ii. 3, 48.

and by some critics is interpreted, as the voice of the dramatist's self-accusation. Which is it?

Let me say, unhesitatingly, that I have no faith in the traditions. One is connected with a local crab-tree; we know how a tradition of that sort never dies; it passes from generation to generation not only of men but of trees, and is attached in each age to the most prominent memory, being probably in origin as old as Thor. The other tradition is recorded by a vicar of Stratford under the Commonwealth, and is to the effect that Shakespeare died of a fever caught of drinking too much wine at a merrymaking with Ben Jonson and Drayton.[1] But doctors tell us to-day that a fever is more easily contracted from bad water than from good wine; and Stratford was notoriously insanitary.

This question of Shakespeare's intemperate habits seems to me a point on which the evidence of his whole successful life may claim to be taken into account. No one can say that his work has suffered from any cheap vice of this sort; and I prefer therefore to hear in the passages I have referred to, the warnings of a man of common sense trying to stem the tide of a foolish fashion. That exclamation of Portia's:

"I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I be married to a sponge,"

[1] Shakespeare died 23rd April 1616; having made the first draft of his will in January, the second in March.

has to my ear a ring of real disgust; and all the criticisms in that scene we may well take to be roughly Shakespeare's own.

More interesting, perhaps, and less easy of solution, is another question of personal habit. "Did Shakespeare smoke?" or, as the phrase then was, "Did he drink tobacco?"

It will be remembered that Shakespeare is one of the very few Elizabethan dramatists who have no reference to that wonderful narcotic which came into England almost at the same moment as his own great genius. The meaning of this silence of his might be argued without end. On the one side, smokers might ask how Shakespeare could possibly introduce tobacco-smoking into romantic or classical drama, the scene of which was laid in mediæval Italy or ancient Rome; or, again, into the Falstaff comedies of Plantagenet days. Or they might urge that if the poet disliked tobacco, it would have been as possible to let the doctor in "Macbeth" compliment King James on his recent "Counterblast" to the pernicious drug, as to let him compliment his Majesty on touching for the King's evil. On the other side the anti-tobacconists might point out that Shakespeare had a good chance to introduce smoking as a gentlemanlike accomplishment in the Induction to the "Taming of the Shrew," where some fun might have been made of Christopher Sly's attempt to

play the gentleman in that particular; but he abstains, and they might add that Shakespeare was probably so sickened of tobacco smoke by the custom of smoking on the stage, that he was little likely to practise it on his own account. The question cannot be determined.

On a higher plane we may ask, had Shakespeare a taste for music? One of the few points on which all the biographers are agreed is that the dramatist was a passionate lover of this art; and they may be right. In an age when music formed part of a liberal education, it is not improbable that he shared in the general appreciation; though his technical knowledge is occasionally at fault. But if we look at the references to music in the plays, we find that they are so much the outcome of the temperament of the *dramatis personæ*, or of the needs of the dramatic situation, that they must be used with caution as evidence of the dramatist's own taste. The famous speech with which "Twelfth Night" opens is in character with the love-sick, sentimental Duke; the no less famous speech of Lorenzo in the last act of the "Merchant of Venice" suits his high-pitched romantic nature, and is moreover in harmony with a scene

> "Where music and moonlight and feeling
> Are one."

The piece of evidence that would incline us to give Shakespeare the benefit of any doubt is the 8th Sonnet, and again the 128th, addressed to a lady playing on the virginals.

From art let us go to politics. Here we can have little doubt as to Shakespeare's general view. An Elizabethan of genius who had gone through the stress of the Armada year when he was twenty-four years old could not but have felt the new thrill of national life and the new sense of England's greatness, and again and again in his plays Shakespeare says a great word that has still power to stir our blood:

> "O England, model to thy inward greatness,
> Like little body with a mighty heart!"

or,

> "This England never did nor never shall
> Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror
> But when it first did help to wound itself,"

or, best of all, John of Gaunt's touching lament in "Richard II." But Shakespeare has been accused of supporting the Stuart ideas of monarchy, especially by his references to the sanctity of kingship. An actor attached to the Lord Chamberlain's company, which with James's accession became the King's, was courtier enough to introduce a respectful compliment now and again to his prince; but those who charge

Shakespeare with abetting the Stuart notions of divine right must surely forget the lessons on the nature of true kingship which are embalmed in the trilogy of "Richard II.," "Henry IV.," and "Henry V." Again it is objected against Shakespeare that he disliked crowds. But who likes them? Mankind does not show well in crowds, even at political meetings in the twentieth century. And Shakespeare lived before the persons and manners of the commonalty had been polished by school-boards. Certainly Shakespeare made his crowds foolish enough, always at the mercy of demagogues; and he made them cruel enough; but take his mechanicals, not in crowds, but singly, and he is far from denying them human virtues. The Citizens in "Coriolanus" have much the best of the argument with Menenius Agrippa, when he is expounding the fable of the belly and its members; they have much the best of the argument with Coriolanus himself when he is suing for the consulship. And can one say that Shakespeare lacked appreciation of Bottom and Peter Quince and the rest of that admirable dramatic troupe?

But leaving these particular tastes and opinions, let us ask whether we can gain any light from the plays on Shakespeare's personal character. How may we set about the investigation? A very brilliant attempt was made in a series of

papers contributed seven or eight years ago by Mr. Frank Harris to the *Saturday Review*, and since collected, to deduce the dramatist's own disposition from a certain predominant type alleged to be found in the plays. Mr. Harris contended that if Shakespeare's many creations were placed side by side, it would be observed that one special type came over and over again, and this type, which the poet found most interesting and has therefore made the most perfect, must, he argues, have been drawn from himself. Just as Rembrandt painted his own portrait at all the critical periods of his life, so, it is alleged, did Shakespeare. He painted it, first, as a youth given over to love's dominion, in Romeo ; a little later, as a melancholy onlooker at life's pageant, in Jaques ; then in middle age, as an "æsthete-philosopher" of kindliest nature in Hamlet and Macbeth ; after that, as the Duke, incapable of severity, in "Measure for Measure" ; and finally, idealised out of all likeness to humanity, in the master-magician Duke Prospero. As a result of an examination of these several portraits Mr. Harris pronounces Shakespeare to have been, in personal disposition, of a contemplative, philosophical nature, of great intellectual fairness and great kindness of heart ; but, on the other hand, incapable of severity and almost of action, of a feminine, sensual temperament, melancholy, soft-

fibred, neuropathic. It is a portrait which has been much praised; and as a *tour de force* it would be difficult to praise it too highly; but the point of interest to us is not whether it is a clever picture, but whether it is a true likeness. I do not think much subtlety will be required to show that it is not. We must first ask what it is, which all these characters have in common, that makes our critic so sure that they are all portraits of the same person. The answer is that they are all persons given to reflection, to self-revelation, to pouring out their dissatisfaction with life, and unpacking their hearts in words, and moreover all persons who do so in incomparable lyric poetry, so that we are sure the voice must be the authentic voice of Shakespeare.

It will be worth while to look for a moment at one or two of these pictures which are thus presented to us as the portraits of the artist himself. On Romeo we need not stay, he is young and a lover, and Shakespeare had undoubtedly been both; moreover Romeo has imagination, like Shakespeare; but when we have added that he was brave and somewhat impulsive, we have noted all his salient characteristics; for "Romeo and Juliet" is not in its chief interest a play of character; the tragic element does not come out of the characters of either hero or heroine; they are but the "most

precious among many precious things" which have to be made a sacrifice of, in order that the bloody feud between the Montagues and Capulets may be healed. But when from Romeo we pass to "the melancholy" Jaques, we may fairly protest against the identification of Shakespeare with him and his view of life. Jaques is a sentimental egotist, and a rhetorical rhapsodiser, who enjoys and parades a philosophic melancholy. We know that Shakespeare did not mean us to admire Jaques's melancholy, because he makes all the healthy-minded people in the play, one after another, laugh at it. And what do the philosophical reflections amount to? There is the satirical speech upon society suggested by the wounded deer, and the Duke tells Jaques frankly that satire is an unhealthy form of employment; and there is the speech, which every child learns, about the seven ages of man, a beautifully written commonplace, but not in Shakespeare's vein. Never does Shakespeare when he speaks in his own person in the Sonnets, and never does he (as I believe) through the lips of the characters with whom he sympathises, pity or despise human life as such; never does he speak of it as merely a stage-play; there are plenty of things in life which disgust and weary him; but he does not say "All the world's a stage." Jaques says that. If Shakespeare, as

one tradition asserts, himself played the part of Adam, he would enter on Orlando's shoulders after the delivery of this speech, no doubt amid the roar of the theatre which had greeted it, and not, I think, without a smile at such uncritical applause. The next portrait is Hamlet, and in finding in Hamlet's mouth hints of the poet's own view of things, our critic is only following a commonly received and justifiable opinion. The Sonnets afford not a few parallels. But the very fact that Hamlet is made the hero of a tragedy implies that the dramatist is viewing his character with not entirely approving eyes. In no tragedy after "Romeo and Juliet" is the hero merely the victim of circumstances, there is always something in his own character which involves him in catastrophe, and without going into detail it is sufficiently clear that the root of trouble in Hamlet's case is just this brooding melancholy which renders him incapable of action except upon sudden impulse. I would urge, therefore, that if we find Shakespeare holding up one kind of reflective melancholy to ridicule in "As You Like It," and showing the fatal consequences of another kind in "Hamlet," the most we could infer would be that he felt in himself the temptation to that infirmity. But all that we know of his outward life gives the opposite impression. At this point, then, I shall take leave to consider

that the method of discovering Shakespeare's character by identifying him with this and that of his *dramatis personæ* has broken down, without going on to discuss his likeness to Macbeth or the Duke in "Measure for Measure," about whom I wish to say a word presently in another connexion, or to Prospero, who has no very clearly defined characteristic but that of benignity.

If we are to reach any results, we must frame our interrogation in a somewhat different form, and ask what light we can get from the plays not directly upon Shakespeare's character, but on his view of life, and his opinions on men and things. And one answer at once suggests itself from what has been already said. We can observe the sentiments put into the mouths of those characters with whom we are plainly meant to sympathise, and contrast them with those that are put into the mouths of other characters with whom we are meant not to sympathise. This is a consideration sufficiently obvious, but it is too often neglected, although it is of the utmost importance to the interpretation of the dramas. There are many little books made to sell for presents which collect what are called the beauties of Shakespeare; but very rarely in such books do we find any discrimination as to the character of the person who makes the speech that is scheduled as a beauty. I have already

commented on Jaques's opinion that "all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." Take for another example the saying of Hamlet which is sometimes a little thoughtlessly quoted:

> "There's a divinity doth shape our ends
> Rough-hew them how we will."

Could any one quote this as the opinion of Shakespeare himself who remembered that it is Hamlet who says it, by way of excuse for his own malady of alternate *laissez-faire* and sudden impulse? On the other hand, the sentiments that have passed, and rightly passed, into the spiritual currency of the English people will always be found put into the mouth of characters with whom, in the action, the poet is in sympathy; and if we collect a few of these, such as the passage beginning "Sweet are the uses of adversity," or

> "There is some soul of goodness in things evil
> Would men observingly distil it out,"

or

> "If our virtues
> Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
> As if we had them not,"

they suggest to us an outlook upon the world bright, hopeful, and stirring; not that of a dreamy, melancholy, sentimental neuropath; they

present a view which is consistent with the picture we obtain from the story of Shakespeare's life, of a man who worked hard in his calling, and of whom his professional comrades could speak with respect and affection: "I loved the man, and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any. He was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature."

But we can get back to something in the dramas more fundamental and more self-revealing than any isolated sentiments. We can observe the way in which Shakespeare viewed his world of men as a whole; what interested him in it; the general idea he had formed of human nature and its possibilities; his opinion of where human success lay and what constituted failure. We can put the question, what sort of place did the world seem to Shakespeare to be? It is quite clear that there was a great deal in the world that filled him with disgust; the Sonnets tell us that:— "Tired of all these, from these would I be gone;" but they tell us also how much there was in the world that he admired and loved; and the more serious plays show us unmistakably that Shakespeare held it to be man's business not to yield to the evil, but to fight it with wisdom and endurance. One point that most strikes us is that Shakespeare looked upon the world as a moral order. Men and women, as Shakespeare saw and

drew them, are always creatures exercising freedom of will. In the writings of some other dramatists, the persons of their dramas are sometimes represented as the sport of the higher powers; but in the world that Shakespeare's art mirrors for us, there is no such thing as a man driven upon evil courses by fate; the spring of each man's action is seen to lie in his own desires; he may do or leave undone. He may apparently be helped or hindered by principalities and powers of worlds invisible; but he cannot be moved by them to action against his will. The "weird sisters" who appear to Macbeth cannot bear the blame of his crime, or share it, because they appeared also to his fellow-captain Banquo, who shook off their suggestion; and Hamlet's ghost, who visits his son, is powerless to touch the springs of his will. And Shakespeare's world is a moral world in the further sense that its men and women are people with consciences; who recognise the rightness or wrongness of actions, and the law of duty. The only one of Shakespeare's writings which takes a merely sensual view of human nature is the poem of "Venus and Adonis"; which is extraordinarily interesting, from our present point of view, as the first visible effect upon Shakespeare's mind of the Renaissance culture with which he came in contact in London, a culture partly euphuistic, partly classical, and

wholly unmoral. The effect unmistakably, for the time, was a complete surrender to the doctrine of what a later age has known as that of "art for art's sake"; which means that any passion of which human nature is capable is suitable for representation, if only it is "as lively painted as the deed was done"; with a preference in practice for the lower nature over the higher. Happily Shakespeare found a valuable corrective to this view of art in his work as a dramatist; and the second poem he produced, a year after the first, though equally upon a classical theme, was on a less animal plane of interest, and admitted such human conceptions as honour and virtue. And ever after it was this higher nature of men that remained to Shakespeare the point of chief interest. We see this most plainly in the tragedies. The purpose and meaning of Shakespeare's tragic art has been much discussed of late, and it is not a question on which I wish to dogmatise; but at least this seems true to say, that while it magnifies the dignity and interest of human action by giving it the most painstaking study, it yet aims at showing how the greatest among men might be brought to ruin, if only the circumstances of life were so contrived as to give opportunity and scope to their errors and defects. In his tragedies Shakespeare contrives for his heroes just the circumstances which shall press upon their weak places,

and test them to the uttermost. The tragedy of Hamlet, or Brutus, or Macbeth, or Othello, or Antony, if it is not the tragedy of a noble and a spiritual nature, is nothing at all. There is no reason why the play should have been written. And if we are justified in drawing conclusions as to the character of a man from a survey of his interests, the light that the Shakespearean tragedies throw back upon the character of their writer is singularly bright and clear. Take, for example, the tragedy of "Hamlet." A philosophical young prince, of a melancholy habit, finds an obligation laid upon him to avenge his father's murder. In any world, except the particular world that the poet has contrived for him, he might have lived a quiet life among his books; doing little active good perhaps, either speculatively or practically; but certainly doing no harm. But he has a task set him by an authority to which he cannot but own allegiance, that of purging the realm of a monster; and the dramatist has shown us in a crucial instance the tragedy of a brooding intellect divorced from will, of the habit of thinking about duties until we think them away. Or take Brutus in "Julius Cæsar." Here again there is question of a student called to action. But the defect of Brutus is not in will, but in practical judgment. In the sacred name of liberty Brutus assassinates the real saviour of society, and lets loose upon

his country the horrors of civil war. In moral purpose his stature is heroic; he means the best; and yet so far is this from atoning for his want of insight into men's real dispositions and the needs of the time, that at point after point his moral prestige but renders his want of wisdom the more fatal. Here then are two pictures of great and lovable men, with weaknesses of character such as in everyday life we are perfectly familiar with, and readily excuse; and Shakespeare teaches us that these defects need only their fit occasion and full development, to overwhelm in ruin the nature that owns them and all who are drawn within the circle of their influence. I venture to think, then, that we are justified in drawing a very definite conclusion as to the disposition of the man who penned these two plays. They show us his high esteem for nobility of character—Hamlet and Brutus are men of a high nobility whom we are taught to love—and they show us also his strong sense of the claim the world has upon the highest powers of the men who are born into it.

But from our present point of view, the tragedy of "Macbeth" is an even better example of Shakespeare's tragic stage, because it directly repudiates an accusation that might perhaps be made against the dramatist, of taking a merely æsthetic view of human life; contemplating it from some lofty

tower of his palace of art. For in Macbeth we have a man in whom this æsthetic appreciation of human life is developed to an extraordinary degree. Macbeth is a poet. He has a fine and keen and true appreciation of all the situations in which he finds himself, except from the one point of view which under his temptations would have been worth all the rest to him, and which his unimaginative fellow Banquo has, the point of view from which actions are judged as simply right or wrong. As we read the soliloquy in which he debates the suggested murder of Duncan, we notice that the considerations which make him hesitate are, in the main, æsthetic considerations; that it is unbecoming in a man's kinsman, or host, or subject, to kill him; there is no question of any sin in murder. And of every succeeding event in his life he is, from the æsthetic point of view, equally appreciative; just as he enjoys popularity and on that score is almost willing to refrain from murder, so he understands that the old age to which a usurper can look forward cannot be surrounded "with honour, love, obedience, troops of friends"; and when, just before the last, he learns his wife's death, he speaks with the same just appraisement the epitaph of the life they have lived together since their great sin, the epitaph of the non-moral life, seeing in it a mere succession of days

with no goal but death, and therefore no real meaning.

> "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
> To the last syllable of recorded time;
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle,
> Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more; it is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing."

Could there be a better commentary on the dramatist's own view of life, than this passionate judgment of the futility of the life Macbeth had elected to live? Let us turn for a moment to the comedies, and see if we can glean any light from them upon what Shakespeare liked or disliked in men and women. It seems to me not a little significant that two at least of the defective types of character which he handles in the tragedies, he handles over again in the comedies, only in the comedy he treats them as they are found not in heroic natures, but in ordinary specimens of humanity, and in circumstances that lead to a much milder form of catastrophe. I have already suggested a comparison between Jaques and Hamlet, each of whom makes the unwarrantable claim to moralise upon life from the outside without taking part in it. In the nobler nature the claim is handled tragically, in

the shallower it is rebuked by Rosalind's fine wit. But there is also some sort of a parallel with Marcus Brutus. The self-satisfaction of Malvolio in "Twelfth Night," looked at by itself, is very much the same quality as the self-satisfaction of Brutus: the lives of both pass in a dream, neither is in touch with the real world; and—it is a curious point—both are snared to their ruin by the same trick of a forged letter so contrived as to fall in with their dreams. But the interest of the comedies, for our present investigation, lies in this, that they present us not only with criticism, but with a positive ideal; and this Shakespeare gives us in his women. The creator of Portia, and Rosalind, and Beatrice, had, we are convinced, a very clear ideal in his own mind of the sort of life that men and women should pursue, a life of sound sense as opposed to folly, and goodness as opposed to vice. There is one other point I should like to draw attention to in Shakespeare's comedies because I think it is characteristic of the man; of his justice and tolerance. While he keeps his ideal perfectly clear, and we are never, I believe, for a moment in doubt as to his own judgment upon his characters, he is not afraid of allowing traits of real goodness to persons who on other accounts are exposed to our censure. Take Sir Toby for example. There is no denying that he is a

terrible toper, and Shakespeare does not make us in love with his drunkenness; but Shakespeare does let us see that in the drunkard the gentleman is not quite extinct. It will be remembered that the disguised Viola, being mistaken for her brother Sebastian, is charged by Antonio with denying her benefactor his own purse. This so horrifies Sir Toby that he draws his friends aside, and will have nothing more to do with the youth. "A very dishonest, paltry boy," he calls him. It is this perfectly firm but perfectly equitable and all-round judgment on points of character that is so wonderful in the plays, and it is a mere caricature to assert, as some critics have asserted, that Shakespeare was merely easy-going on points of morals.

Indeed, in one famous case, it might be better pleaded that he was too severe a moralist. I imagine every one feels a shock when at the end of "Henry IV." he comes upon the new king's sermon to his old boon-companion Falstaff. "I know thee not, old man; fall to thy prayers." It may have been, as has been eloquently maintained, that Shakespeare had made Prince Hal, from the first, a bit of a prig, and knew he would preach when the chance came. It may be so. My own feeling rather is that Falstaff's misfortune is that he comes into a historical play instead of a pure comedy. In the "Merry Wives

of Windsor," Falstaff, notwithstanding his enormities—and Shakespeare needs all the excuse of a Royal Command for the way he has degraded him—meets no further punishment than the jeers of his would-be victims; it is sufficient in comedy that faults should be judged by laughter. Nobody wants Sir Toby put on the black list as a tippler, or Autolycus sent to gaol for filching linen from the hedges. But when the world of comedy touches the real world, as in "Henry IV." and "Henry V.," social offences have to meet social punishment, and so we have not only Falstaff exiled from court and dying of a broken heart, but poor Nym and Bardolph hanged for stealing in the wars.

The question of Shakespeare's religion is too large and difficult to be discussed at the end of an essay, but I should like to say a word about his supposed hatred and abuse of Puritans. This is one of the fixed ideas of the very meritorious life of Shakespeare by Dr. Brandes. "From 'Twelfth Night' onwards," he says, "an unremitting war against Puritanism, conceived as hypocrisy, is carried on through 'Hamlet,' through the revised version of 'All's Well that Ends Well,' and through 'Measure for Measure,' in which his wrath rises to a tempestuous pitch" (p. 240). We turn to "Twelfth Night" and find this: Maria says of Malvolio—"Marry, sir, sometimes he is a kind of

Puritan;" to which Sir Andrew replies, "O, if I thought that, I'd beat him like a dog."

"*Sir Toby.* What, for being a Puritan! thy exquisite reason, good knight?

"*Sir Andrew.* I have no exquisite reason for't, but I have reason good enough.

"*Maria.* The devil a Puritan that he is, or anything constantly but a time-pleaser."

Now, surely, that passage might have been introduced in defence of Puritans rather than in scorn of them. Sir Andrew takes the tone of courtier-like contempt, and Sir Toby asks him to explain; and he can't, Then Maria retracts the name, and says Malvolio can't be a Puritan because he isn't conscientious. The reference in "Hamlet" turns out to be Hamlet's saying "A great man's memory may outlive half his life, but by'r lady he must build churches then," but the oath *by'r lady* is proof enough that no one in the audience would take a reference to the Puritans. In "All's Well," that most disagreeable of all Shakespeare's plays, I believe one of the earliest he wrote, which even his revision in the Hamlet period could not cure, the Clown indeed makes some unsavoury jests, but he blunts their edge by dividing them equally between Papist and Puritan; and I should say that to find in "Measure for Measure" an attack on Puritanism is entirely to misconceive that play. The heroine of the play

is Isabella, and if Isabella is not a Puritan after Milton's strong type, what is she? Dr. Brandes does not indeed assert that Shakespeare wrote the play in the interest of Pompey and Mistress Overdone; but that he wrote it in the interest of King James, who was already coming to blows with Puritanism, and wished to defend his indifference to immorality. When questions are raised as to the general ideas underlying a play, the appeal must be to the general impression it makes on the indifferent spectator; but apart from that, as conclusive against Dr. Brandes' view, it seems sufficient to point to the scene in the first act where the Duke confesses to Friar Thomas that he had been too remiss, and again to such a speech as this at the end of the play:

> "My business in this state
> Made me a looker-on here in Vienna,
> Where I have seen corruption boil and bubble
> Till it o'errun the stew."

If Shakespeare had strong opinions about the Hamlets of the world not bestirring themselves to do their duty in it, we may guess that his view extended to reigning princes, though as to them he had to express himself with some reserve.

In one word then, if I am asked how we can get behind Shakespeare's writing to the man himself, I should say, we must ask ourselves what

is the impression left on our mind after a careful reading of any play; because that will be Shakespeare's mind speaking to ours. And I cannot think the general impression we thus gather from the great volume of the poet's work is at all a vague one. We feel that the praise he gives to Brutus is still truer of himself.

> "His life was gentle; and the elements
> So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
> And say to all the world, This was a man!"

We are conscious all through the plays of the allied graces of gentleness and manliness. There is in them a clear outlook upon life, both on its good and its evil; a strong sense that however the evil came about (and there were times when it seemed overwhelming), yet that the good must fight it; and at the same time there is a gentleness that is prepared to acknowledge good in unexpected places, and is ready to forgive.

NOTES BY AN EXAMINER IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

ἀνεξέταστος βίος οὐ βιωτὸς ἀνθρώποις.

—PLATO, *Apol.* 38.

NOTES BY AN EXAMINER IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

WITH SOME SELECT BLUNDERS

I

I HAVE just been reading over again a paper by Canon Ainger upon the teaching of English Literature, reprinted among his "Lectures and Essays." This, as I remember, was the occasion of our first correspondence. My earliest literary venture was an edition of "Julius Cæsar," which was to show the teaching profession how a play of Shakespeare should be handled in class, and this I made bold to send to the writer of the article. Those were the days when Mr. Aldis Wright was pouring out the treasures of his philological learning into the notes of an edition of Shakespeare issued by the Oxford University Press; and, as these books were employed in such schools as studied literature at all, the too frequent results were in the pupil's mind nausea, and in the teacher's despair. They reduced the plays to separate words, and separate words, to parody George Herbert's apt saying, "make not

Shakespeare but a dictionary." The change that has come over the teaching of English in the last decade and a half is clearly enough gauged by the examination conducted by a joint board of the two ancient universities which began operations at about that epoch. A portion of my summer holidays has been spent year by year, during most of that period, in looking through the results of the examination; and it is satisfactory to see how steady has been the improvement in teaching, and how well the pupils have responded to it. It used to be a commonplace among men of letters—and perhaps it is so still, for traditions die hard—that to examine in poetry must be to brush off the bloom from the flower. It is bad enough, it was said, to annotate a poet; but to treat him as subject of an examination is both inhumane and dehumanising. I do not think the poets themselves would take this view. A learned poet, like Tennyson, might be shy of having all his obligations pointed out, from the fear that a foolish public might question his originality; but no great poet would prefer not to be understood. If Shakespeare's ghost ever haunts the Cotswolds he would, I feel confident, have taken even more pleasure than I did to-day in seeing a small boy settled in a sunny corner and spending the summer afternoon with one of his immortal

works in the excellently annotated edition of my friend Mr. Verity. I can even conceive him putting a few questions to see if the youngster saw the point of what he read: "Do you think Lady Macbeth was right in what she said about her husband's character?" "Do you feel sorry for Shylock?" "Do you like Octavius or Mark Antony best?" "Do you think Hamlet meant what he said about not killing his uncle at his prayers?" "Which is the jolliest fool in all my plays?"

Literary gentlemen, who speak scornfully of examinations, have usually in their minds a type of question which happily exists no longer, at any rate in the public schools. Canon Ainger, in the article to which I have referred, gives a supposed specimen of a paper on literature which deserves all the fun he makes of it.

"We all know [he says] what to expect when we take up an examination paper on English literature as set to the higher forms of a good school; it is sure to contain questions something after this model:

"Name the authors of the following works: 'The Hind and the Panther,' 'Beowulf,' 'Acis and Galatea,' 'Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay,' 'The Shortest Way with the Dissenters,' and 'Adonais.' Give a brief account of the contents of these works. To what class of literature do they belong?

"Write a life, with dates, of Sir John Suckling. What do you mean by the 'metaphysical' poets? Discuss the appropriateness of the term."

One sees the gentle smile playing round the mouth of the humorist as he penned the sarcastic sentence, "Give a brief account of the contents of these works (which you have never read)." By the side of the ingenious piece of imagination cited above may I place a paper actually set this year in the Joint Board Examination, in order that my readers may judge whether it would indeed be soul-destroying for a lover of literature to answer it. And, to give the opponents of examination every advantage, let choice be made of a paper on a comedy, "As You Like It."

1. Discuss the prominent part taken in Shakespeare's comedy by the female characters, with special reference to "As You Like It."

2. Illustrate the element of common sense which pervades this play, from the treatment Jaques receives.

3. Quote Touchstone's "seven degrees of the lie." What part does he play in the comedy?

4. Point out the jest intended in the following passages:

(*a*) *Le Beau.* Three proper young men of excellent growth and presence—

Ros. With bills on their necks, "Be it known unto all men by these presents" (i. 2, 130).

(*b*) I should bear no cross if I did bear you, for I think you have no money in your purse (ii. 4, 12).

(*c*) Truly thou art damned like an ill-roasted egg, all on one side (iii. 1, 39).

(*d*) As the most capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the Goths (iii. 3, 8).

(*e*) "'Good-morrow, fool,' quoth I. 'No, sir,' quoth he, 'Call me not fool, till heaven hath sent me fortune'" (ii. 7, 18).

5. Explain fully, giving speaker and context:

(*a*) I was never so berhymed since Pythagoras' time, that I was an Irish rat which I can hardly remember (iii. 2, 188).

(*b*) Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might,
Who ever loved that loved not at first sight? (iii. 5, 82).

(*c*) A traveller! By my faith you have reason to be sad! (iv. 1, 21).

(*d*) 'Tis a Greek invocation to call fools into a circle. I'll go sleep if I can; if I cannot, I'll rail against all the first-born of Egypt (ii. 5, 61).

(*e*) I see love hath made thee a tame snake (iv. 3, 70).

6. How are the following words used in this play—*disable, rankness, thrasonical, unexpressive, modern, ill-inhabited?*

I am far from saying that this examination paper in any way reaches the ideal; my contention simply is that it can do no harm to the young person's love of letters. It aims at discovering, first, whether the text has been read; secondly, whether it has been understood; and, incidentally, whether it has given pleasure. And it was most cheering to observe how well the work was done by the very large majority of schools; so much so indeed that I heard examiners complaining that in these degenerate days a hundred papers will hardly yield one amusing blunder. My own experience has been more fortunate;

perhaps my sense of humour is "tickle o' the sere." In the first question, for instance, it amused me to notice with what varying degrees of skill the entirely irrelevant fact would be introduced, that in Shakespeare's days the female parts were taken by boys. As long as boys are boys, facts will be facts, and they must be compelled to come in.[1] But, besides this, there are always one or two great and venerable foundations where a customary contempt for anything that is not classical obliges young gentlemen to take their English literature papers at sight; and the natural consequence that the said young gentlemen never succeed in winning their certificate in no way diminishes the buoyancy of their attack the next year. It is perhaps a little foolhardy, considered as competition, but it is undoubtedly magnificent; there are few things so engaging as the sight of a really clever boy grappling with his author by the mere light of nature and general information. Let me give a few specimens. It is usual in literature papers to set certain passages for identification, and here lies the perplexity of the youth who has taken his books as read, or read them over-hastily with

[1] The grandest example I recollect of such compulsion occurred in an answer to a question about Dr. Johnson's criticism of "Lycidas": "The last subject of the royal touching for scrofula gave it as his general opinion," &c.

his feet on the fender ; but with genius perplexity is but another name for opportunity.

I could have better spared a better man
—(1 *Henry IV.* v. 5, 104.)

This was said by Hotspur when King Henry was trying to kill him.

There is surely an intimate knowledge of human nature about that suggestion, which in the sterner competitions of life ought to stand its author in good stead.

He has no children.—(*Macbeth*, iv. 3, 216).

A half-aside to Malcolm in Macduff's presence by a messenger who did not know how to break to him the news of Macbeth's massacre of his wife and babes.

The only parallel in literature to such delicacy must be that of the American miner, who broke to a woman the loss of her husband by addressing her as "widow."

Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.
—(*Hamlet*, iii. 2, 149.)

"By the Virgin Mary, this is going too far ;" the king says this after the play, when he discovers that Hamlet knows his secret.

This interpretation makes plain at any rate that the student of the play had been struck by the remarkable patience of the king after making his discovery. Hamlet was certainly pushing eccentricity a little far. No reasonable murderer could be expected to stand it.

A second fertile source of amusement lies in the ineffectualness of paraphrase. Mr. Quiller-Couch once made a public protest against examiners for asking for paraphrases, on the sensible ground that poetry cannot be translated. The poet's words are the best for his purpose, and to suggest to the student that others can be substituted for them is to do him wrong. There is a good deal to be said for this position, and I observe that examiners now ask for explanation rather than paraphrase. But the pupil often finds a paraphrase the easiest form of explanation, and so volunteers it. I have noted a few from time to time which suggest many reflections ; but these I leave the reader to make for himself.

My way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf.

"I have become middle aged : it is time to die."

Vouchsafe, defused infection of a man,
For these known evils but to give me leave
By circumstance to curse thy cursed self.

"Allow me, thin and infectious man, to curse you in my own roundabout way."

Come, I have heard that fearful commenting
Is leaden servitor to dull delay.

"Come now, I have heard that talking of such terrible matters is only waste of time."

It is silly sooth,
And dallies with the innocence of love
Like the old age.

"He is silly, and plays with love, like an old person."

Still you keep on the windy side of the law."

"The windy side is the breezy side."

Transparent Helena! nature shows art
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.

"Helena, you are so thin, that I can see your artful heart through your natural bosom."

On a forgotten matter we can hardly make distinction of our hands.

"We cannot shake hands on a matter, if we have forgotten what it is."

I prithee, foolish Greek, depart from me.

"Leave me, enigma."
"I beg you, foolish though merry fellow, leave me."

Augures and understood relations have
By magot-pies and choughs and rooks brought forth
The secret'st man of blood.

"Magicians by means of magpies have extracted blood from the most secret of men."

It were too gross
To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.

"It would be too inhuman to take her waxed grave-clothes off her in such a manner."

This last paraphrase throws light on the verses that the great dramatist is said to have composed, or at least commissioned, for his own tomb at Stratford; and it may be commended to the attention of deans of our cathedral and collegiate churches, who are said to be inclined to this form of "inhumanity."

Of explanations of single words and phrases the following are perhaps above the average of such things:

Fata morgana—"The fate of Evans Morgan."
"A mortgage on fate."
Rankness—"Good society."

But for pure ingenuity I know nothing to beat the number of explanations of *fee simple:* "Cash down," "the ordinary fee," "as easy as tipping," "simply a matter of money," "simple interest," "at cost price," "merely a question of costs," "the small salary of the clergy," "money without goods," "quite simple," "a simple fee, no bribes," "without any extra charge," "a legal term for the conveying of entrails."

A *batlet* was once defined by a Bedford boy as a "peggy stick for possing clothes with," an explanation which enriched his examiner's vocabulary by two provincial terms.

Canon Ainger, in his paper, made an appeal for the reading of Chaucer in schools. He pointed out how easy the dialect was to master, and how great excellences and delights awaited the young student who would master them. It is an interesting commentary upon his suggestion, that quite the best part of the Oxford and Cambridge examination in English is the Chaucer paper. The girls' schools, especially, have taken up the study with zest, and we may look forward in

consequence to a great diminution by and by in the ranks of unhumorous women. Of course school differs from school in the success with which the mediæval atmosphere is appreciated. There seems some want of imaginative reconstruction of social life in the statement, given in response to a question about Chaucer's social and intellectual qualifications for founding a new literature, that "he saw all sorts and conditions of common people who came to his father's wine-shop, and afterwards, when he obtained a situation as page-boy to the Duke of Clarence, could study the upper classes," as also in the statement that as "surveyor of taxes he had excellent opportunities for studying manners," or possibly the want of them. But so far as *enjoyment* of an author can be tested by an examination paper—and a good deal can be judged in Chaucer's case by asking for examples of his humour, his skill in indirectly censuring defects of character, and so forth—there can be no doubt that the delights of the Father of English Poetry have been recovered for this generation. Chaucer's vocabulary is more remote than Shakespeare's, and consequently ingenuity in paraphrase achieves more remarkable triumphs; but they are necessarily "caviare to the general." One or two specimens may be allowed. Chaucer's aphorism that "men may the olde at-renne (outrun) and noght at-rede (out-

wit)" becomes in one modern version, "You may outrun an old man, but not outride him," and in another, "You may outrun the old, but not outtalk them;" personal experience in both cases perhaps suggesting the interpretation. In the passage from the "Prologue":

> *A cook they hadde with hem for the nones,*
> *To boille chicknes with the mary-bones,*
> *And poudre-marchant tart, and galingale,*

young ladies had a chance of supplying their linguistic deficiencies from their knowledge of domestic economy. One said, "They had a cook with them to boil chickens for the nuns without drying up their marrow, and to make tarts (with bought baking-powder) and ginger ale." Nobody need be ashamed of forgetting that *poudre-marchant* is a "tart" spice and *galingale* a herb, but what ingenuity to convert *poudre-marchant* into "bought baking powder"! Another suggestion was "nightingale and sparrow pie," but I do not see the point of calling a sparrow *poudre-marchant* unless it be that he marches to his depredations through the dust. The young ladies of our academies have still, it must be confessed, a good deal of lee-way to make up in wit and humour; even the study of Chaucer does not convert them all in a year. One summed up the impression of Chaucer's character and tastes left upon her mind in the carefully balanced sentence: "He had a

taste for men and women, and for masculine and feminine rhymes"; another was most impressed by "his practical knowledge of agriculture"; a third, after recalling the fact that in Chaucer's day "England was full of bilingualism," thought his most striking characteristic was "a great brain specially endowed for the great purpose of settling the English language on a firm basis."

Of the papers in Milton and Spenser there is not much to say. They are among the favourite subjects, perhaps from their straightforwardness. The girls revel in Spenser's allegory, and the boys in Milton's classical allusions. Occasionally a child of nature will speak of "the *Pilate* of the Galilean lake," or suggest that "the Attic boy" was Chatterton, "who died in an attic"; occasionally, too, a wit will see his opportunity, as when one youth, quite in the spirit of Chaucer, explained *buxom* as "yielding," and added "now only used of women"; and another opined that *secular bird* was a slang name for a parson. But for the most part these Puritan authors are treated with the seriousness they deserve. The same is true of the prose men, Bacon and Burke.

A constant element in this examination is the essay, on one of half-a-dozen set subjects. The really good essays are naturally few; they come from a boy or girl here and there, with the inborn gift of insight and expression. But schools differ

greatly from each other in the general quality of the stuff they turn out. The young ladies at one famous finishing school achieve in a couple of hours a page and a half of matter which is inferior in every respect to the four or five pages turned out by other seminaries.

Some damsels present the examiner with an elaborate analysis almost as long as the essay that follows; others deal more kindly and shortly with him—*e.g.* "Patriotism: its divisions; Patriotism in schools; England's examples; Poets' words"; and then proceed to business. Only the wisest keep their analysis to themselves. In the essays of boys from certain well-known schools it is often interesting to trace the influence of the head-master's views in politics or philosophy. The favourite topic this year was Hobbies; and the innate practical sense of the English race came out in the determination to justify hobbies to the conscience on utilitarian grounds. The collecting of stamps and postcards teaches geography; bird's-nesting and the keeping of rabbits and white mice teach zoology and the love of animals; carpentering and gardening train the muscles; bee-keeping the temper; and all alike keep boys from smoking and idling, men from being a nuisance to their families, and the poor from frequenting the public-house. And then there is the consideration of profit and loss. Photography and stamp collecting

leave a young person considerably out of pocket; for fretwork and the progeny of rabbits there is, among one's relations, only a limited sale; therefore it is generally best to have two hobbies, one for profit, as to garden or keep bees, and one for the weakness of the flesh, as to collect stamps or birds' eggs.

So speaks the wisdom of England's youth. As an example of what the other sex can accomplish in this sort, I will take leave to quote a few passages from an essay with which one examiner at least was more than content:—

"A hobby is a pursuit followed eagerly and zealously as a means of recreation. Many and various are the objects of those hobbies, each one choosing according to temperament. One, with a leaning towards mechanics, may work like a hatter striving to evolve some piece of mechanism more powerful than had been made before. Another, with less athletic frame, may study Greek and Roman mythology, tracing its influence on the religion of the present day, in which it is now seen as Higher Criticism. A third may take pleasure in rearing, riding, and driving splendid horses; indeed it was from this pursuit that the word "hobby" arose. It is derived from the Greek *hippos*, meaning a horse, and the Anglo-Saxon *hoban*, a strong, active horse. This derivation will be easily proved to be correct, by comparing it with the expression so often used, that of 'riding a hobby to death.'

"Hobbies help one to concentrate one's attention on some definite object, to strive to attain that object by accurate thought and deed, while they keep the mind from dwelling on harassing subjects for the time being.

"No hobby can be entirely useless if entered into intelligently; and many have been of no small service in revealing Nature's secrets. Some great scientists have derived their knowledge from the hobby, taken up in youth, of wandering *alone* with Nature over the warm bosom of Mother Earth, and learning Nature's lessons there. Besides, one has scope to exercise individuality in one's hobby, and by exercising it to increase the importance of one's opinions, and in that way to make one's self no insignificant unit in the nation."

II

I BELIEVE that the public schools examination, to which I have referred in the previous note, does no harm to either pupil or teacher. It aims simply at discovering whether pupils have read and understood their books; and as a teacher's first duty is to explain the text of the books read, and the last cannot be anything higher than to make its substance live in the imagination of the student as it lived in that of the author, I do not see that an examination upon set books, which treats them as literature, and not as texts for lessons in historical grammar, can interfere with the work of even the best teacher. The examinations that do harm are those that profess to examine boys and girls in English literature generally, without setting special books or authors for them to study. I may, perhaps, be allowed to illustrate from an examination which, through circumstances which I need not go into, I have been privileged to take part in—the matriculation examination of the University of ——. I have examined nearly six hundred papers out of as many thousands, and the conviction is strong upon me that the examination requires the very careful reconsideration of the Board responsible for it.[1]

[1] Since this note was written, the examination has, I believe, been remodelled.

The subject of the examination as announced in the University Calendar is as follows: "English grammar and composition, with elementary questions on the history of the language and literature." The paper set on the occasion I speak of consisted of fifteen questions, of which not more than ten were to be answered: seven in Language and three in Composition and Literature. With the former section of the paper I am not now directly concerned, but I should like in passing to ask two questions that were continually in my mind as I read the papers. The first was: What purpose have we in view in teaching English grammar to English children? Must it not be to train them in speaking and writing good English, and in reading English authors with exact comprehension of their meaning? If that be so, and I do not think it can be disputed, it seems to follow that the only legitimate way to examine in grammar is to set sentences from good authors to be parsed and analysed, idioms from good authors to be explained, and so forth. The English *fact*, whatever it is, should be given to English children, and what is asked for should be the explanation of the fact. I cannot conceive any better logical exercise for young people than the analysis of passages in our standard writers. Grammar papers usually contain such set passages, but too many of the questions are of a different type. All sorts of

tabulated lists are asked for, which grammar books supply, and these are crammed solely for examination purposes. Now I submit that it should be a first principle with an examiner in grammar never to ask for a list of any kind. To learn such lists is bad for the pupil in all sorts of ways; it wastes his time and misdirects his energies; it stuffs his mind with unrelated facts; worst of all, it represses thought. In the paper upon which I am taking the liberty of commenting there was a capital passage set for analysis from Milton's "L'Allegro":

> "And ever, against eating cares,
> Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
> Married to immortal verse;
> Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
> In notes, with many a winding bout
> Of linked sweetness long drawn out."

I examined the analysis of this passage through the whole five hundred candidates, independently of the other questions, and with special care, because it seemed to me the one test of real importance in the paper. And the test succeeded, for the majority of candidates failed to meet it. The prevailing impression was that it was the poet who was said, by a figure of rhetoric, to be "married to immortal verse," and so required tucking up in "soft Lydian airs"; and the soul was as regularly taken as the piercer instead of

the pierced. That is to say, the majority of the candidates whose papers I saw were uneducated in English up to the level of being able to construe a fairly simple passage of verse; and they ought to have been plucked accordingly. But when I turned to the other answers it was evident that the time that ought to have been spent in the practice of scrutinising sentences had been given to mere cramming. The questions that piled up the marks were such as the following:

In how many ways can the sound of *f* be expressed? Mention one instance each of words in which the following letters are silent: *b*, *g*, *h*, *k*, *l*, *s*, *t*, *w*.

Give five instances of adjectives that can be used as substantives, and take the inflexional *s* in the plural.

Give a classification of the strong verbs.

How may pronouns be classified?

Write down short sentences illustrating the use as various parts of speech of the words *that*, *before*, *but*.

The precision with which these lists were given was shocking; even the last question was usually answered pat from memory, of course with various degrees of accuracy; but scarcely a candidate failed to record the interesting fact that *but* could be used both as a verb and a noun, because a character in Shakespeare says "But me no buts."

One point of interest struck me: that the candidates who did the analysis well avoided the lists of strong verbs and pronouns. It is fortunate that I knew these young scholars merely by their numbers, or I might be tempted now to advertise the schools in which they were bred. The second question I asked myself concerned the reasonableness of requiring junior students to offer historical grammar; because *elementary* historical grammar is not learning at all, but cram. It was a wise man who said "A little learning is a dangerous thing." Being asked to "name ten common words which we have borrowed from the Scandinavian," the young people reeled off their lists with admirable precision; unless, by a not infrequent chance, they reeled off the Celtic list by mistake. The education gained by those who gave the right list and those who gave the wrong was equal; and but for my bond to the senior examiner I should have given them equal marks for an equivalent feat of memory. Neither those who were right nor those who were wrong had any idea of the process by which the philologer attempts to distinguish the Anglican stock from the Scandinavian importation; and to learn results apart from processes is not scientific education, but the teaching proper to parrots; and this a great university, it seems to me, should disdain to encourage.

I pass now to the literary side of the paper. And here I would ask with all respect and seriousness of the Board that controls this examination whether they think that pupils of the sort likely to matriculate at —— University, that is, those who are finishing their education at secondary schools with no intention of going on to Oxford or Cambridge, are likely to have, or ought to be required to have, a knowledge of the history of English literature upon which even the most elementary questions can reasonably be based. I am afraid the phrase "elementary question on the history of English literature" conveys to my mind no meaning at all. Either you have read a man's works, or you have not read them; and if you have not read them, I do not see how you can have even the simplest elements of knowledge about them. The usual acquirement in English literature of a town boy of sixteen is a play or two of Shakespeare, a novel or two of Scott, perhaps a poem or two of Tennyson; but for the purposes of this examination he is supposed to have a general acquaintance with the whole course of the literature from Chaucer downwards. Inevitably he flies to handbooks that he may know *about* writings which he does not know; and crams up short biographies of the bigger names. I hasten to say that the senior examiner does, in my humble judgment, as well as he conceivably

can with his directions; and so, having to ask "elementary questions in the history of English literature," he asks for biographies of people of whom the candidates may reasonably be expected to have heard, and gives them a wide field of choice. "Give," he asks, "a very short account of the life and chief works of two of the following: Milton, Swift, Wordsworth, Byron, Tennyson."

The examining of several hundred papers, in the short space of time that can be given to the process, does not allow of many notes being made by the way; but I jotted down from time to time a few characteristic passages, and I will offer a selection of these for the consideration of parents and guardians. To begin with Milton. Almost everybody who wrote Milton's life knew that his father was a scrivener, and that the poet was born in Bread Street, though a few by a natural confusion said Milk Street. Several were still more particular on a matter of such high importance, and located the house as the "Spread Eagle." Variations of his nickname at college were "Christ's lady" and "the lady Christ." As a rule the fact that he served under the Commonwealth and lost his eyesight in the service was known, and there were few but knew that he had three wives and unsympathetic daughters. Beyond that he was, as likely as not, confused with other poets such as Shakespeare, Byron, Spenser, Shelley,

and Chaucer: "he married Jane Hathaway;" "he lived at Newstead Abbey;" "he fell in love with a fair widow's daughter of the glen;" "he published in his youth several worthless tales;" "he fought in France, where he was captured and shortly after released;" and so forth. But when his works came to be enumerated still wilder confusion prevailed, as was only natural, considering how many lists of entirely unknown books had been committed to memory on the chance of their being asked for. Here is a list I happened to note: "Every Man in His Humour," "Every Man out of His Humour," "Samson Agonistes," "Eikon Basilike," "Areopagitica." The appended literary judgments were no less striking. "Milton wrote in very varying metres and uses 89 per cent. of Anglo-Saxon verbs." (This seems to refer to Tennyson.) "'Paradise Lost' is the most famous lyric poem in the English language, and with Homer's 'Illyad' holds the chief place among lyric poems ever written." "The 'Paradise Lost' like a stately temple is vast in conception but involved in detail." "Milton's style was sublime and comprehensive, and at the same time soothing." How much more salutary would it have been for these young people if they had been set to master a single book of "Paradise Lost" instead of being encouraged to offer criticism of what they had never read. Candidates

who had not learned, or had forgotten, their biographies were tempted to indulge in such empty fine writing as the following: "Milton had the great misfortune to be born blind. Yet his life is an example of what may be done by a man under seemingly overwhelming physical disadvantages. This extraordinary man was born in the Midlands in the time of Charles I. He took the side of the Parliamentarians in the Civil War, and this led to the distinction of being made secretary to the great Oliver Cromwell. The name of Milton was destined not to suffer by association with that of the Protector, and will go down to posterity with equal lustre." I should like to record how one candidate sounded for once a wholly natural note by remarking that "although Milton returned from his continental journey at the outbreak of the Civil War without seeing Greece, yet England was not much better for his sacrifice, *for he opened a school in Aldersgate Street.*" It struck me that the contempt of this young student for a schoolmaster's life may have arisen from the method employed to prepare him for his examination.

Of Wordsworth's life such details as his birth at Cockermouth and his burial at Grasmere were generally known, as well as the fact that he lived in retirement; "took up," as one phrased it, "the position of retired poet." The papers then divided

themselves into those which offered simply a more or less imaginative list of works, and those which gushed about the "poetry of Nature." "Wordsworth died a natural death. He was the author of the 'Excursionist.'" "Wordsworth was an early Victorian poet. He wrote the 'Excursion.' He also wrote 'The Ring and the Book.'" "Wordsworth's 'Excursion' is one of the finest poems of its sort ever written. Besides this he wrote numerous preludes which are very beautiful." "Wordsworth wrote 'The Fate of the Nortons' and 'Intimations of Immortality.'" "Wordsworth regarded Nature as a sweetheart. His principal work is 'Tales of a Wayside Inn.'" "William Wordsworth is known as the poet of Nature. In his youth he received a university education, and that led him to say that the meanest flower that blew gave him thoughts too deep for tears. It seemed as if a blade of grass spoke to him. Probably the beauties of his home surroundings (Lake District) led him to love Nature. His longest poem was the 'Excursion'; but many shorter ones are well known, as 'Lucy Gray,' 'The Post-Boy,' 'The Pet Lamb,' while his 'Ode on Immortality' is indeed grand." But for the unfortunate intrusion of "The Post-Boy" one might perhaps have been almost persuaded that this young gentleman had read the poems of which he spoke so glibly.

I don't know what induced the examiners to ask for a life of Byron, but the examinees were prepared to be asked. They had ready both a list of his works and a censure of his morals ; and though one unfortunate youth described him as the contemporary of Addison, Steele, and Tennyson, as a rule the main dates were accurately given. The general style of the answers may be judged from the following extracts: "Byron was the son of a dissolute guardsman and an Aberdeenshire heiress, and he inherited the defects of both parents." "Byron was born of noble but dissolute parents, and led a private life which does not bear too searching an investigation." "'Cain' is the most thoughtful of his works; others are 'Gulliver's Travels,' 'Don Juan,' and 'Beppo.' He has not much imagination, but the powers of his intellect are wonderful, and we wonder at his amazing productiveness."

Swift was another author of whom most of the candidates thought meanly on insufficient grounds. "Swift studied for the church, and on only getting a deanery when he had hoped for a bishopric he was a disappointed man, and spent his time in writing books." "Swift," said another wiseacre, "was the author of 'Gulliver's Travels' and 'Three Men in a Tub'!"

When we come to Tennyson there are a few indications that the candidates had read some of

the poems with whose names they were so painfully familiar. Thus there was a very general reference to the "Ballad of the *Revenge*" in the list of minor works with which the biographies concluded; but it was a little distressing to read laboured eulogiums of the "In Memoriam" when the terms of the eulogy showed that the work had never been opened by its panegyrists. One described it as dedicated to the memory of Edgar Allan Poe; another to that of the Prince Consort; another to the historian Henry Hallam; another gave as an alternative title "The Passing of Arthur Hallam." Great stress was almost invariably laid on Tennyson's "beautiful," or "magnificent," or "unparalleled" poem of "Timbuctoo," which I dare lay a wager none of them had ever seen. I suppose the name stuck in their memories. I find the following among my notes: "Tennyson tells of his early life in the Prelude." "Tennyson was born in Lincolnshire, and we can trace the influence of the fens and flats in many of his poems." Whether this was meant for epigram I am not sure. "Tennyson was a poet who lived in recent times. He became Poet Laureate and retired to the Isle of Wight, where he was scarcely ever seen. He was a very great smoker."

Another question in the paper—and, under the circumstances, an excellent one—was: "Write a brief account of any one of Shakespeare's plays."

In many cases the answers to this question were quite satisfactory; the writers had evidently read the play which they described. But the crammer had as plainly anticipated this question as the others. From some descriptions it was obvious that what had been read was a summary of the play, and not the play itself. The "Merchant of Venice" was a favourite choice, and all sorts of queer variations were introduced. Antonio was married to Portia; Jessica came into court disguised as a judge to outwit her father; Antonius is a young gallant who courts Porcia; or the plot turns on an unnamed "Moor of Venice, who, being in money difficulties, borrows from a Jew." Of the answers based upon reading *about* plays instead of reading the plays themselves I will give a short specimen at full length: "In Shakespeare's 'King Lear' the principal character is King Lear. He is an old king, and has his share of national trouble. Some of his courtiers and advisers go against the old man, in order that they themselves may gain; and he has to endure storms and cold and hunger when he is driven from home. He is a man more sinned against than sinning, and he knows how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child, as a bastard son of his is induced to take up arms against him. The bitter things that he is compelled to endure, besides physical discomforts, gradually drive him mad.

He is depicted in a shocking condition, wandering about among caves and goblins, when his only loved one, Cornelia, a daughter, visits him. Hers was a noble character; her voice was ever soft, gentle, and fair—an excellent thing in woman. She died before her father, whose affairs were just then looking better, owing to the faithful service rendered by the Duke of Kent."

Now answers of this sort are apt to raise a smile, but the smile becomes a little sardonic when we recollect that the perpetrators of such unconscious jests have been through a process which their parents fondly believe to be education.

THE END

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